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VOL. I.

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NEW YORK:  
PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,  
FOR ALSTON MYGATT.

1848.

NO. 1000  
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LIVES

OF

JOHN STARK,

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN,

RICHARD MONTGOMERY,

AND

ETHAN ALLEN.

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NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,  
FOR ALSTON MYGATT.

1848.

NO. 1111  
SEPTEMBER 1840

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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It is the design of this work to add something to the stock of our native literature in the department of Biography. The specimens here presented to the public will indicate, with sufficient clearness, the nature of the plan, and the manner in which it may be executed.

Our purpose is not to attempt the methodical arrangement or comprehensiveness of a dictionary, in which the number and proportional length of the articles are matters to be considered; but rather to select prominent names, to which opportunity and inclination may attract the different writers, and thus enable them to perform the task of a biographer with the more fidelity and interest in the subject. Hence the length and structure of each article will depend on the amount of materials accessible to the author, his judgment and taste in choosing from them, and his facility in narration.

The two principal objects to be attained, in biographical compositions, are accuracy as to facts and finish in the literary execution. The former demands research, the latter labor and skill. Biography is only another form of history; truth is the first requisite, simplicity of style the next. It admits of no embellishments, that would give it the air of fiction; and yet its office is but half done, unless it mingles entertainment with instruction.

The plan of this work embraces the lives of all persons, who have been distinguished in America, from the date of its first discovery to the present time. Such a scheme, if faithfully carried through, on the scale here assumed, would embrace a perfect history of the country, of its social and political progress, its arts, sciences, literature, and improvements of every kind; since these receive their impulse and direction from a comparatively few eminent individuals, whose achievements of thought and action it is the province of the biographer to commemorate. A hint of the possibility of such a result would certainly not be

ventured by the Editor, if he were not permitted to rely on the aid of a large number of coadjutors, whose names might afford a pledge of its attainment.

This beginning, however, is only an experiment, which will be pursued or abandoned as future contingencies may dictate. Arrangements have been made for publishing four volumes within the compass of a year. After this trial, should there be found sufficient encouragement, the work will be continued, and a volume published quarterly. Each life will be prepared expressly for this work, except perhaps in a very few instances, where, to give completeness to the collection, it may be deemed advisable to reprint articles of standard value, which could not be amended by writing them anew. As the authors' names will be prefixed to their respective performances, the Editor will of course not hold himself responsible for any statements or opinions, except those proceeding from his own pen.

*January, 1834.*





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John Hawk Your Believer  
Jenny Hamble servant

Robert Rogers. John W. M.  
Major.

Let H. Warner your most Obedt<sup>s</sup>  
Hum. & Serv. E. ph. Williams

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

L I F E  
OF  
J O H N S T A R K ;

BY  
EDWARD EVERETT, LL. D

VOL. I.

1

B





JOHN STARK.

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THE great political consequences of the war of the Revolution have thrown into comparative obscurity the previous military history of the British North American Colonies. In reality, however, the military efforts made by those Colonies, not only in the Seven Years' War, but in that of 1744, were of great importance. Large forces were kept on foot; distant and important expeditions were undertaken with success; valuable conquests were achieved; and, on more than one occasion, a very decisive influence on the politics of Europe was exercised by the colonial governments. Great importance would have been attached to these transactions, but for the greater importance and interest of those, which followed so close upon them, in the war of the Revolution. But it is not the least of the reasons, why we ought to study the history of these earlier wars, that they formed in reality the great school, in which the military leaders of the Revolution were trained.

Among the eminent pupils of this school, John Stark was, by no means, the least distinguished. His character is one of original strength and resource. He would have risen to consequence and authority, however rude and uncivilized the community in which he had been thrown; and had he been trained in the discipline, and enjoyed the opportunities, of the great armies of Europe, his name would have reached posterity, as a military chieftain of the first rank. In the peculiar social and political condition of the country, allowing an almost indefinite scope for the peculiarities of individual character, the temperament of General Stark prevented his rising decidedly above the sphere of the partisan leader; but he was unquestionably a partisan of the highest character, and rendered services of an importance not easily surpassed, those of Washington out of the question, by any achievements of any other leader in the army of the Revolution. An account of the life of General Stark has been published, as it would appear, by his family, from authentic materials.\* This will be our authority for every

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\* "Reminiscences of the French War, containing Rogers's Expeditions with the New England Rangers under his command, as published in London in 1765; with Notes and Illustrations; to which is added an Account of the Life and Military Services of Major-General John Stark, &c. Concord, N. H., 1831."



thing which belongs to personal history in the following Memoir, and for many matters relative to the military and public career of its subject ;— an acknowledgment which we wish to make in the amplest terms, in the outset, to avoid the necessity of repetition and marginal reference.

JOHN STARK was born at Nutfield, now Londonderry, in New Hampshire, on the 28th of August, in the year 1728. His life began in hardship. His father, Archibald Stark, was a native of Glasgow in Scotland, and emigrated while young to Londonderry in Ireland. In the year 1720, he embarked with a numerous company of adventurers for New Hampshire. These emigrants were descended from the Scotch Presbyterians, who, in the reign of James the First, were established in Ireland, but who professing with national tenacity a religious belief, neither in accordance with the popular faith in Ireland, nor with that of its English masters, and disliking the institutions of tithes and rent, determined to seek a settlement in America. The first party came over in 1718, and led the way in a settlement on the Merrimac river. They were shortly succeeded by a large number of their countrymen, who brought with them the art of weaving linen, and first introduced the culture of the potato in this part of America ; and furnished from their families a large number of the pioneers of civilization

in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine, and some of the most useful and distinguished citizens of all these States.

The vessel, which brought over Archibald Stark and his party, arrived in Boston, about the time of the alarm of the prevalence of the smallpox. The account we follow, places it in 1720, and states that the vessel, in consequence of having the smallpox on board, was not allowed an entry in Boston. As 1721 was the year, when the smallpox committed the most formidable ravages in Boston, having been brought in a vessel from the West Indies, it is not unlikely, that the party of Stark arrived in Boston Bay, while the panic produced by the ravages of the disease was at its height. At all events, they were refused permission to land in Boston; and they passed the winter on the banks of the Kennebec in Maine, and near the spot where Wiscasset was afterwards settled. The following year they removed to Nutfield, where they had been preceded by the first emigrating company of their countrymen. Here a permanent and flourishing settlement was founded, which took the name of Londonderry in 1722, in memory of the place of their abode in Ireland.

This place was in advance of the compact settlements, and consequently was exposed to the brunt of Indian warfare, which precisely at this

period was commencing for the fourth time since the first establishment of the English Colonies. A tradition is preserved, that the settlers at Londonderry were occasionally preserved from savage violence, by the interposition of Father Rasles, a French Missionary, established among the Norridgewock tribe of Indians. The particular motive, which prompted the tenderness of this French Catholic toward a settlement of Scotch Covenanters, has not been handed down with the tradition.

John Stark was the second of four sons. In 1736 his father removed from Londonderry to Derryfield, now Manchester. Here John remained in the family of his father till the year 1752. In this year he went upon a hunting excursion to Baker's River in Rumney, in the north-western quarter of the State, and a spot at that time far beyond the range of the English settlements. The party consisted, besides himself, of his elder brother William, and of David Stinson, and Amos Eastman. On the 28th of April, they were surprised by a party of ten Indians of the tribe established at St. Francis. Stark's party had discovered the trail of the Indians two days before; and were preparing, in consequence, to leave the ground. John had separated from his companions to collect the traps; and while thus employed was surprised by the Indians. On

being questioned about his companions, he pointed in the direction opposite to that which they had taken, and thus succeeded in leading the Indians two miles out of the way. His companions unfortunately, becoming alarmed at his absence, and ignorant of its cause, fired several guns as a signal to him. This betrayed them to the savages; who, proceeding down the river below the encampment, lay in wait to intercept their boat, as it should descend. The hunters, suspecting what had happened, were moving down the river, William Stark and Stinson in the canoe, and Eastman on the bank. At sunrise in the morning, Eastman fell into the hands of the savages, who, at the same time, ordered John to hail his brethren in the boat, and thus decoy them to the shore. Instead of obeying this command, John had the courage, after explaining his own situation to his brother and Stinson, to advise them to pull for the opposite shore. They did so, and were immediately fired upon by four of the Indians. At the moment of the discharge, Stark knocked up the guns of two of the Indians; and did the same when the rest of the party fired a second volley, calling to his brother William to make his escape, as the guns were all discharged. This his brother succeeded in doing; but Stinson was killed. For his boldness on this occasion, Stark was severely beaten by the Indians, who, taking

possession of the furs collected by the hunting party, retreated to Coos, near where Haverhill, New Hampshire, now is, and where two of their party had been left to collect provisions against their return. Having passed one night here, they proceeded to the upper Coos (Lancaster), from which they despatched three of their number with Eastman to St. Francis. The remainder of the party spent some time in hunting upon a small stream in this neighbourhood. Stark, confined at night and closely watched by day, was permitted by his new companions to try his fortune at hunting, and, having trapped one beaver and shot another, received the skins as his reward.

On the 9th of June, the party returned to St. Francis, where Stark rejoined his companion Eastman. They were compelled to undergo what is called the *ceremony* of running the gantlet; a use of that term, which modern effeminacy would hardly admit. It was the universal practice of the North American Indians, to compel their captives to pass through the young warriors of the tribe, ranged in two lines, each furnished with a rod, and, when highly exasperated, with deadly weapons, to strike the prisoners as they passed. In the latter case, the captive was frequently killed, before he could reach the council-house, at which the two lines of Indians terminated. On the present occasion, Eastman was


severely whipped, as he passed through the lines. Stark, more athletic and adroit, and better comprehending the Indian character, snatched a club from the nearest Indian, laid about him to the right and left, scattering the Indians before him, and escaped with scarcely a blow ; greatly to the delight of the old men of the tribe, who sat at some distance, witnessing the scene, and enjoying the confusion of their young warriors.

Stark and his companion remained some time among the St. Francis Indians, by whom he was kindly treated. He possessed opportunities, which he did not allow to pass unimproved, of studying their manners and customs, particularly in their military excursions. At the end of six weeks, Captain Stevens of Number Four (Charlestown, New Hampshire), and Mr. Wheelwright of Boston, were sent by the General Court of Massachusetts to redeem some of the citizens of that province, who had been carried into captivity. Not finding those of whom they were in search from Massachusetts, they liberally paid the ransom of Stark and Eastman, the former being redeemed for one hundred and three dollars, the latter for sixty. Massachusetts was in the habit of redeeming, from the treasury of the province, her citizens who were carried away captive ; but Stark and Eastman were never repaid by New Hampshire, the sums advanced to them by the Massachusetts

Commissioners. They returned by the way of Albany to Derryfield in New Hampshire, after an absence of about four months.

The unhappy want of political concert between the Colonies at this period is curiously illustrated by the fact, that the party of Indians, who had plundered and captured Stark and his companions, travelled with them to Albany, and there, without molestation, made sale of the very furs, which they had taken from these citizens of a sister province in time of peace ; — for this adventure preceded by four years the breaking out of the war of 1756.

Stark was accustomed, throughout his life, to attach no small importance to this incident in his youthful history. During the three or four months, which he passed among the Indians, he carefully observed their manners and character ; and acquired a practical knowledge on these points, of great value to a frontier partisan. He appears to have caught the humor of the Indians, and to have known how to approach them on the side of their prejudices. He was ordered by them to hoe their corn. Well aware that they regarded labor of this kind as fit only for squaws and slaves, he took care to cut up the corn and spare the weeds, in order to give them a suitable idea of his want of skill in unmanly labor. As this experiment upon their good nature did not



answer its desired object, he threw his hoe into the river, declaring "it was the business, not of warriors, but of squaws to hoe corn." This spirited deportment gained him the title of young chief, and the honor of adoption into the tribe. He never ceased to recur with pleasure to the incidents of his captivity among the St. Francis Indians, and to maintain, that he received more genuine kindness from them, than he ever knew prisoners of war to receive from any civilized nation. The practice of ransoming the captives had already taken much from the horrors of Indian warfare. Before this practice had rendered the lives of prisoners valuable to the savages, the cruelties inflicted by them on those, who fell into their hands, are known to have been of the most revolting character.

The ill success of this expedition furnished new reasons for undertaking another, the next year, to the head waters of the Androscoggin, in order to raise from the proceeds of his hunting a sum of money to enable him to discharge his debt to the Massachusetts Commissioners. The report, which he brought back from this and his former excursion to the upper Coos country, determined the General Court of New Hampshire to explore it. A company was enlisted for this purpose, under Colonel Lovell, and John Stark was engaged as the guide. They commenced



their march from Concord, on the 10th of March, reached Piermont on the 17th, and, after passing one day in making observations upon the country, returned to Concord on the 23d. This country, however, was claimed by the Indians, and had never been brought within the acknowledged limits of the English governments. Foreseeing the mischiefs which would result to the Colonies by a forcible occupation of it, on the part of the people of New Hampshire, the Governor of Massachusetts used his influence with the Governor of New Hampshire, to obtain a postponement of the measure. In the year 1754 a report reached the English settlements, that the French were building a fort in this coveted region. A party of thirty men was despatched by the Governor of New Hampshire, with a flag of truce, to remonstrate against this proceeding. John Stark was selected as the guide of the expedition, and conducted the party to the upper Coos, by way of the Little Ox-Bow, being the same route which he had travelled before, as a captive of the Indians. They found no traces of the French in the country, and were the first party from the Colonies, which explored the fertile meadows on the banks of the Connecticut, where the flourishing towns of Haverhill and Newbury are now situated.

In the year 1754, the great Seven Years' War in reality commenced. It grew out of the strug-

gle between the British and the French for the possession of North America. The British having preceded the French in occupying the better portions of the coast, the French turned their attention to the interior; and made it their object, by means of the St. Lawrence, the Lakes, the Ohio, and Mississippi, and a chain of posts judiciously established along this line of water communication, to prevent the progress of the English westward. The Ohio Company was formed in 1749, and was the first link in the chain of causes, which brought on the rupture. In the year 1754 the memorable project of a union of the Colonies with a view to their defence against the French and Indians was matured at Albany, and signed on the 4th of July; and on the same day Colonel Washington was obliged to capitulate to the French and Indians at Fort Necessity. A very extensive plan of campaign was projected for the year 1755, consisting of three parts. The first was an expedition against Fort Duquesne, to be conducted by General Braddock with troops from England; the second was an attempt upon Fort Niagara, to be made by the regular forces raised in the Colonies, and Indians; and the third was an expedition against Crown Point, to be carried on exclusively by New England troops, raised for that purpose.

A corps of rangers was enlisted in New Hampshire for service in the last expedition, by Robert Rogers, who acquired great reputation as a partisan officer in the progress of the war. Stark's experience on scouting parties obviously fitted him for this service; and his character was already so well established, that he received a commission as a lieutenant in the regiment, which was commanded by Colonel Blanchard. This regiment was first ordered into the Coos country, and directed to burn the meadows, preparatory to building a fort. But at Governor Shirley's instance, before reaching their place of destination, the order was countermanded, and they were directed to repair to the army assembled against Crown Point, by the way of Number Four and Albany. At the time the troops arrived at headquarters, General Johnson was encamped on Lake George. The New Hampshire regiment was stationed by him at Fort Edward, a position which had been taken up by General Lyman, at the landing-place on the east side of the Hudson. It was the design of General Johnson, about the beginning of September, to move against Crown Point and Ticonderoga, a post about fifteen miles south of Crown Point, which, he had understood, had been fortified by the French. The movement of the Anglo-American army was, however, anticipated by the advance of the Baron Dieskau, the French general.

This officer had lately arrived at Montreal, with a body of French troops. His instructions directed him to reduce the English post at Oswego ; but the news of the movement against Crown Point having reached Montreal about the time of the Baron Dieskau's arrival, and having produced alarm there, the Baron was importuned to pass up Lake Champlain with his forces, to resist the advancing Anglo-American army. This was accordingly done ; the Baron transported his troops to Fort Frederic (Crown Point), and, having waited there for some time the approach of the English army, resolved to march against them. He accordingly embarked two thousand men in boats from Crown Point, and landing at South Bay marched on towards Fort Edward, where the New Hampshire rangers were stationed. When within two miles of the fort, he communicated his design of assaulting it to his troops. The Canadians and Indians in his army, dreading the effects of the cannon of the fort, were unwilling to make the attempt, but expressed their readiness to march against the main body encamped at the Lake, and, as it was understood, without lines or artillery. On this representation, the Baron changed his course and marched against the camp.

Intelligence meantime had reached the camp, that the French had landed at South Bay, and were marching upon Fort Edward. Two mes-

sengers were despatched by General Johnson to the Fort with this intelligence. One of these messengers was intercepted and killed; and the other returned to the camp with information, that he had discovered the French about four miles to the northward of the Fort. It was resolved, in council of war, to send a strong detachment to the relief of the Fort. A thousand men were detached from the army, with two hundred Indians, for this service, and placed under the command of Colonel Ephraim Williams, a brave Massachusetts officer. Baron Dieskau had posted his troops advantageously in a defile. Deceived by the small number of men apparently opposed to him, the ardor of Colonel Williams and his troops betrayed him into an ambushade. Baron Dieskau had reserved his regular troops in the centre for the main attack, and ordered the Canadians and French to enclose the Anglo-Americans on the flanks. The Baron, with a view to a complete surprise, had ordered the Canadians and Indians to reserve their fire, till they should hear the attack of the main body in the centre. Hendricks, the Mohawk chief, attached to Colonel Williams's party, perceived the approaches of the Canadian Indians, and brought on the engagement. It was severe, and bravely contested; but the French force being nearly double of the Anglo-American, the latter was obliged to retreat,

with the loss of Colonel Williams, the gallant officer in command, and of Hendricks, the Mohawk chief. M. de St. Pierre, the French officer in command of the Canadian Indians, was also killed. The loss was considerable on both sides.

We trust we shall be pardoned for pausing a moment in the narration, to pay a deserved tribute to the memory of Colonel Ephraim Williams.

He was a native of Newton, near Boston; but his father, Colonel Ephraim Williams the elder, was one of the earliest settlers of Stockbridge. Colonel Williams the son, being of an adventurous disposition, for several years in early life followed the seas. In his different voyages to Europe, he visited England, Spain, and Holland, and acquired the information and accomplishments of an observant traveller. Having, at the request of his father, determined to establish himself at home, and possessing a decided military taste, he entered the army enlisted for the war (that of 1744), then raging between England and France, and commanded a company raised in New England on what was called the Canada service. He was afterwards placed in command of the line of Massachusetts forts, on the west side of Connecticut river. While he held this command, his principal station was Fort Hoosac, on the bank of the Hoosac river, in the present town of Adams, about three miles and a half east of

Williamstown. There was also a small fort at Williamstown, under his command. The first settlements, in this part of the country, grew up under the protection of these forts. Colonel Williams was the witness of the efforts, the hardships, and the perils of the early settlers; and, forming a just anticipation of the future importance of this part of the country, he conceived the design of making provision for the means of education in this quarter of the Commonwealth.

After the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, Colonel Williams resided chiefly at Hatfield, in the county of Hampshire. On the breaking out of the war in 1755, his high military character obtained him the command of a regiment, which was attached to the army under General Johnson, destined against Crown Point. While at Albany, on his way to head-quarters, a presentiment of his approaching fate seems to have taken possession of him, and on the 22d of July, 1755, he made his will. He fell by a musket-shot through his head, on the memorable 8th of September, in the engagement already spoken of. He was at this time scarcely passed forty years of age. His person was large and commanding. He had a strong taste for books, and habitually lamented the want of an academical education. His address and manners were remarkably engaging. In the general Court of Massachusetts, he possessed a greater personal influence than

any other individual, and in the army he was beloved by the soldiers. Having no family, he appropriated, with wise liberality, the greater part of his property to the foundation of "a Free School in a township west of Fort Massachusetts." The property bequeathed was not very large; but, by judicious management, by legislative aid, and private subscriptions, it proved adequate to the establishment of the Free School, subsequently the College, situated in Williamstown; which has long enjoyed a high character among the institutions for education in the country, and will transmit the name of its gallant, patriotic, and unfortunate founder, in grateful and enduring remembrance.

The fortune of the day, disastrous at first to the Anglo-American army, by the loss of Colonel Williams and the repulse of his detachment, was soon reversed. The retreating troops were met by a party sent out to their aid, and, falling back with them on the main body, awaited the approach of the enemy on the borders of the Lake. Johnson was advantageously posted. A deep, woody swamp covered his flanks, and in front, behind a breastwork of trees, he had mounted several cannon, opportunely received from Fort Edward two days before. This fact had escaped the observation of the French spies. The army of Baron Dieskau came to a halt; the retreating Provincials recovered their spirits, and opposed a manful resistance to



the approaching enemy. The Canadians and Indians were dismayed at the appearance of artillery within the breastwork, and, at the first discharge of the cannon, fled to the swamps. They were soon followed by the main body in a disorderly retreat. The American army instantly pursued, and completed the rout of the enemy. The Baron himself, wounded in the leg, was found leaning on the stump of a tree entirely alone, on the field where, but a few hours before, he had commanded an army flushed with success. While feeling in his pocket for his watch, to surrender it to the soldier who had surprised him, the latter, supposing him to be in search of a pistol, discharged his musket at him, and gave him a wound, which eventually proved mortal. He lived however to reach England. This soldier is believed to have been General Seth Pomroy of Northampton.

Baron Dieskau was conducted a prisoner to the English camp ; and, the pursuit not being continued, the remains of his army rallied upon the precise spot, where the party of Colonel Williams had been defeated in the morning. At this juncture a detachment of the New Hampshire troops at Fort Edward, about two hundred strong, on their march to the relief of the main body, fell in with the remnants of the French army and put them completely to rout. Captain McGinnis, the brave commander of the party, unfortunately lost his life in the moment of victory.

Thus were fought on the same day, and upon the same field, three several battles, with the loss of three commanders, and an Indian chief. General Johnson himself was wounded. The hill overlooking the defile, where Colonel Williams met his fate, is still called French Mountain; and the spot on which he fell is known as Williams's Rock. Close by the road, and on its north side, is a circular pond, two or three hundred feet in diameter, shaped like a bowl, into which the dead bodies of both parties were thrown in undistinguished confusion. From that day to the present, it has borne the name of the *Bloody Pond*.

Such was the introduction of Stark to the perils of regular warfare; and with the momentous events of this day the campaign began and closed. The advantages gained by General Johnson, who was created a baronet for his success, were not followed up by the pursuit of the original objects of the expedition; and with the exception of six hundred men who were retained to garrison Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, which was built on the shore of Lake George and near the site of Johnson's encampment, the army was discharged. Colonel Blanchard's regiment was among those disbanded, and, with the other officers composing it, Lieutenant Stark returned home.

It was, however, but for a brief enjoyment of the repose of private life. Although the leading

operations of the war were suspended by the season, it was judged expedient, that a full company of rangers should be attached to the garrisons, left at the forts between Lake George and the Hudson. Major Rogers was employed by Governor Shirley to recruit such a company, which he did principally in New Hampshire ; and such was his confidence in Stark, that he bestowed on him again the commission of second lieutenant. By the express directions of Governor Shirley, none were to be enlisted in this corps, but men accustomed to travelling and hunting in the woods, and men in whose courage and fidelity entire confidence could be placed. The Journal of his service with these rangers was published by Major Rogers in 1765, at London, and presents an exceedingly interesting view of their severe and perilous warfare. Their duty was to reconnoitre the hostile posts and armies, to surprise straggling parties, and obtain prisoners, to effect diversions by false attacks, to serve as guides and couriers. They acted in a corps independent of the line of the army, under their own officers, and with their own regulations, as prescribed by their gallant leader, and still preserved in his Journal alluded to. It was made their duty, by their instructions, "from time to time, to use their best endeavours to distress the French and their allies, by sacking, burning, and destroying their houses, barns, barracks, canoes, and batteaux, and

by killing their cattle of every kind ; and at all times to endeavour to waylay, attack, and destroy their convoys of provision by land and water, in any part of the country where they could be found."

Majors Rogers divided his corps. A part of it marched under Lieutenant Richard Rogers to Albany, and the other half, under his own immediate command, directed their line of march by the way of Number Four. Shaping their course from this place toward Crown Point, they pursued their way "through vast forests and over lofty mountains." On the second day of the march, Lieutenant Stark fell sick, and was obliged, with a guard of six men, to repair to Fort Edward. On their way to the fort, they fell in with and eluded a scouting party of four hundred hostile Indians.

The Journal of Major Rogers above mentioned, details the operations and adventures of his corps during the season, and cannot be perused without lively interest ; but our limits compel us to pass briefly over them. So important were the services of the corps of rangers, that it was judged expedient by General Abercromby, who superseded Governor Shirley in the command, to double its numbers. A new company was accordingly raised, and placed under the command of Richard Rogers brother of the Major. The place of first lieutenant in the old company, being thus vacated, was filled by the promotion of Second Lieu-

*Rangers  
In Service*

tenant Stark. In the month of August, a company of Stockbridge Indians, led by officers of their own tribe; commissioned by Governor Shirley, was taken into the service and acted occasionally in connexion with the rangers, whose skill as woodsmen was in no degree inferior to that, which was possessed by these natives of the forest. Early in August, the Earl of Loudoun took the command. By his direction, the rangers departed on a scouting expedition in two parties, one headed by Rogers and the other by Stark, in which they ascended Lake Champlain a considerable distance, reconnoitring the enemy's positions, and lying in wait for straggling parties. They did not return to the fort, till the end of September. From this time to the close of the season, the rangers were on continual service, exploring the woods, procuring information, and bringing in prisoners. On the 19th of November they made an excursion for six days, down the lake. Captain Abercromby, aid-de-camp and nephew of the General, had the curiosity, notwithstanding the severity of the season in this high latitude, to accompany the party. Nothing was effected in a military way, beyond obtaining a sight of the French garrison at Crown Point; but the young officer was delighted with the novelties of the scout, and with the romantic and noble scenery, through which the rangers conducted him. At the close of the season

the troops were principally drawn off to Albany ; but the rangers remained on duty at Forts William Henry and Edward. They were joined, at the end of the year, by two additional companies of rangers from Halifax, under Captains Hobbs and Spikeman.

Early in January, 1757, a party of the rangers was detached on an expedition down the Lake, which ended in an engagement of great severity, in which we behold clear indications of the future hero of Bennington. On the 15th of January, a party consisting of Major Robert Rogers, his Lieutenant, John Stark, Ensign Page of Richard Rogers's company, and fifty privates, marched from their station at Fort Edward to Fort William Henry, where they were employed two days in preparing snow-shoes and provisions for their excursion. They were joined on the 17th by Captain Spikeman, and sixteen officers and men from his company ; by Ensign Rogers, with two men of Captain Hobbs's company, and a volunteer of the 44th Regiment. The party proceeded down Lake George on the ice, and at night encamped on the east side of the First Narrows. Some of the men, lamed by the exertions of the first day, were obliged to turn back ; and the party was thus reduced to seventy-four men, officers included. The march was continued for the three succeeding days, on the Lake, and on the land by means of

snow-shoes. On the twentieth they encamped at night, within three miles of Lake Champlain. On the twenty-first day they marched in an easterly direction, till they reached the Lake, half way between Crown Point and Ticonderoga, when they discovered a sled, passing on the ice from the former to the latter. Lieutenant Stark, with twenty men, was ordered to intercept the sled in front. Major Rogers, with another party, threw himself in the rear, to cut off its retreat, leaving Captain Spikeman with the centre. Rogers from his position soon discovered ten other sleds passing down the Lake, of which he endeavoured to apprise Stark, before he should show himself on the ice, but without success. The moment Stark was seen, the sleds hastily turned back toward Ticonderoga. Rogers's party pursued them, took seven prisoners, three sleds, and six horses; the rest escaped. From their prisoners they learned, that there was a large body of French troops, Canadians and Indians, at Ticonderoga, who were amply supplied with provisions, and equipped for service at a moment's warning.

Not doubting, from this information, that the news of their presence in the neighbourhood would be carried by those who had escaped, and would cause them to be immediately pursued, Major Rogers gave orders to his party to retreat with all expedition to the station they had occupied

the night before, where their fires were still burning, and to prepare for battle by drying their guns, as it was a rainy day. They commenced this march in the rangers' manner, single file, the Major in front and Lieutenant Stark in the rear.

In this manner they passed a mile over broken ground and crossed a valley fifteen rods in breadth, when the front, having gained the summit of the opposite hill on the west side, fell in with the enemy drawn up in the form of a crescent, with a view to surround the party of rangers. At the moment of making the discovery, Major Rogers's party received the discharge of the enemy at least two hundred strong, and at a distance of not more than five yards from the nearest and thirty yards from the rear of the party. The first fire proved fatal to Lieutenant Kennedy and a private, and wounded several, among others Major Rogers himself in the head. Major Rogers ordered his party to retreat to the opposite hill, where Lieutenant Stark and Ensign Brewer, who commanded the rear, had already posted themselves, to cover the retreat. Rogers was closely pursued; Captain Spikeman and some others were killed, and several were made prisoners. But the steady fire, kept up by Lieutenant Stark and his men from the hill, by which a number of the enemy were killed, enabled Rogers and the survivors of his party to place themselves to advantage. A hasty disposi



tion was then made, by the reduced band of rangers. Stark with Ensign Rogers took a position in the centre ; Sergeants Walker and Phillips, (the latter a half-breed,) acting on the reserve, to protect the flanks, and watch the enemy's motions. They were scarcely formed, before the French attempted to flank them ; but a prompt and vigorous fire from the reserve drove back the flanking party with loss. A formidable assault was then made in front ; but the rangers, having the advantage of the ground, and being sheltered by large trees, from which they kept up a continual fire, repelled the attack. Another attempt was made to surround the rangers, but without success.

In this manner the action, which began at two o'clock in the afternoon, was kept up till sunset, when Major Rogers received a wound through his wrist, which prevented him from holding his gun. It is related, on the authority of Eastman of Concord, New Hampshire, who was a private in Stark's command in the action, that when Major Rogers received his second wound, he was inclined to order a retreat. Lieutenant Stark, then almost the only officer not wounded, declared that he would shoot the first man who fled, that they had a good position, and he would fight till dark and then retreat ; and that in this course lay their only chance for safety. At this moment, the lock of his gun was broken by a shot from the enemy ;

but, seeing a Frenchman fall at the same time, he sprang forward, seized his gun, and continued the action. Shute, another private in the party, of Concord, New Hampshire, lately deceased, was struck by a ball in the head and made senseless, about the time that Rogers was wounded in the wrist. On coming to himself, he perceived one of the party engaged in rather a singular operation of surgery. He was cutting off Major Rogers's queue to stop the hole in his wrist, through which the ball had passed.

The enemy used every artifice to induce the rangers to submit. He assured them, at one time, that large reinforcements were at hand, by whom they would be cut to pieces without mercy, and that if they surrendered they should be treated with kindness. He called on Rogers by name, and assured him of his esteem and friendship, and expressed his regret that his brave companions in arms should persist in maintaining the contest, at the hazard of certain death. But these blandishments were as unavailing as the superior physical power of the enemy; and, after Major Rogers's second wound had disabled him, the contest was kept up by Lieutenant Stark with equal bravery and conduct, till at the approach of night the fire of the enemy ceased, and the rangers were able to take up their retreat in safety.

The rangers were much weakened by the loss of men killed, and they had a great number too severely wounded to travel without extreme difficulty and the assistance of their comrades. Still, however, they were so near the French fort, that it was deemed absolutely necessary to make the best of their way during the night. Perceiving a large fire in the woods, which they supposed to be that of a hostile party, they made a long circuit in the night, and found themselves in the morning six miles south of the advanced guard of the French, on Lake George. The wounded were unable to advance farther on foot, and they were still forty miles from Fort William Henry.

In this distressing state of affairs, Lieutenant Stark volunteered with two of his men, to proceed to the fort and return with sleighs for the wounded. The snow was four feet deep on a level, and could be traversed only in snow-shoes. Notwithstanding their efforts and exhaustion the preceding day and night, Stark and his companions reached the fort, at a distance of forty miles, by evening. They got back to their companions with a sleigh and a small reinforcing party by the next morning. The party, reduced to forty-eight effective and six wounded men, with the prisoners they had taken from the convoy, reached the fort in safety, the same evening.

Before the sleigh came to their relief, the party, looking back upon the ice, saw a dark object following them. Supposing it might be one of their stragglers, the sleigh, on its arrival, was sent for him. It proved to be one of their party (Joshua Martin of Goffstown, New Hampshire), whose hip-joint had been shattered by a ball, which passed through his body. He had been left for dead on the field of battle, but recovering himself, he had kindled a fire in the night; and, thus being kept from freezing, was enabled to drag himself after them to the Lake. This was the fire, which the retreating rangers had supposed to belong to a hostile camp. The loss of time occasioned by the circuitous line of their retreat enabled Martin, badly wounded as he was, to overtake them. He was so exhausted, that he sunk down the moment the relief reached him. He was transported, with his disabled comrades, to the fort, recovered from his wounds, served through the war, and died at an advanced age at Goffstown.

In this severe affair, the rangers, out of seventy-eight men, had fourteen killed, six wounded, and six taken prisoners. The force of the enemy engaged amounted to two hundred and fifty, of which, according to a statement subsequently made by the enemy to Major Rogers, one hundred and sixteen were killed or mortally wounded. A large share of the honor of the day unquestionably be-

longs to Stark. After the first partial success against the convoy, it was recommended by the council of officers to retreat, by a different route from that by which they came ; a settled practice of warfare borrowed by the rangers from the Indians. Had they pursued this prudent course, they would have escaped the battle. Rogers, however, rendered confident by a long series of successful adventures, and relying on the terrors, with which his rangers had inspired the enemy, declared that they would not *dare* pursue him, and took the same route back. The valor and resolution of Stark and his division of the little party evidently saved the whole band from destruction, when they fell in with the overwhelming force of the enemy. After Captain Spikeman was killed and Rogers was disabled by his wounds, Stark's fortitude and perseverance prevented the party from throwing away their lives, in a panic flight before a victorious enemy ; and, by volunteering to travel forty miles on snow-shoes and accomplishing the journey in a day, after the toils of the preceding days and nights, he brought off the wounded in safety. On the reorganization of the corps, Stark received the justly merited promotion to the rank of Captain, in the place of Spikeman, who was killed. The whole party were honorably noticed by the commander-in-chief.

In the month of March, 1757, Fort William Henry was saved by the forethought and vigilance of Captain Stark, then, in the absence of Major Rogers, acting commander-in-chief of the rangers. While going the rounds on the evening of the 16th, he overheard some of his rangers, planning a celebration of St. Patrick's (the following) day. A large portion of this corps were, like himself, of Irish origin. Knowing that there were also a great many Irish among the regular troops, he justly foresaw the danger, to which the post would be exposed, at the close of a day to be spent in excess and intoxication. He accordingly gave directions to the sutler that no spirituous liquors should be issued, except by authority of written orders from himself ; and when applied to for these orders, he pleaded the lameness of his wrist, produced by a wound, as an excuse for not giving them. In this way he kept the rangers sober. The Irish troops of the regular army, forming a part of the garrison, celebrated the day with the usual license and excess. The French, acquainted with the Irish custom, and calculating upon the consequent disability of the garrison, planned an attack for that night. They were, however, repulsed by Stark's sober rangers, while the stupefied regulars were coming to their senses.

In the month of April, Stark's company of rangers, with several others, was ordered from

the position on the lakes, to Albany and New York, whence it was embarked for Halifax, as a part of the expedition, against that place, under the Earl of Loudoun. Captain Stark himself, being on a scouting party at the time the troops broke up from their quarters, did not rejoin his company till it reached New York. He was there seized with the smallpox, and thus prevented from proceeding to Halifax. At the close of the season, his company was again ordered to its old position on the lakes, and was rejoined by him at Albany. During the winter, he was stationed at Fort Edward. Fort William Henry had capitulated to the French in the course of the summer, and many of the unhappy prisoners of war experienced the fate, too often attending capitulation to an army composed in part of savages. They were dragged from their ranks and tomahawked, in the sight of the French officers.

The force of rangers was very much increased for the year 1758, by the enlistment of four new companies of a hundred men each, and a company of Indians to be employed in the ranging service. The four companies were promptly enlisted in New England. This increase of force formed a part of the prodigious military effort, made both by the British government and the Colonies for the approaching campaign. Bent on the acquisition of Canada, at whatever cost, the governments

on both sides of the Atlantic made exertions unparalleled in former wars. Massachusetts resolved to raise seven thousand men, Connecticut five thousand, and New Hampshire three thousand ; a force which, in proportion to the population, would have been deemed very great in France, under the government of Napoleon. The Earl of Loudoun having returned to England, General Abercromby was intrusted with the command-in-chief of the entire forces in the field, amounting in troops of all descriptions to fifty thousand men, the largest army, which had ever been arrayed in America.

Captain Stark remained with his company of rangers at or near Fort Edward, actively engaged in the arduous duties of that service. A severe action was fought on the 13th of March, by a detachment of about one hundred and eighty men under Major Rogers, against six hundred French and Canadians. A portion of Captain Stark's company was detached on this unequal service, but he himself was not included in it. On the retreat of the remnant of the brave but over-matched party, he was sent out with a small band, to aid their return.

The force collected for the expedition against Ticonderoga was about sixteen thousand men, and on the morning of the 5th July, 1758, it was put in motion, in batteaux, to descend Lake George



"The order of march," says Major Rogers, in his Journal, "exhibited a splendid military show." The regular troops occupied the centre, and the provincials the wings. For the advanced guard, the light infantry flanked the right, and the rangers the left, of Colonel Broadstreet's batteau-men.

In this order the army proceeded until dark, down Lake George, to Sabbath-day Point. Here it halted to refresh. On this momentous evening, in expectation of the impending battle, Lord Howe invited Captain Stark to sup with him in his tent. With that amiable familiarity which endeared him to the army, this gallant and lamented nobleman, reposing upon a bear-skin (his camp-bed), with the brave partisan from the wilds of New Hampshire, conversed with him on the position of the fort and the mode of attack. The imagination of the young and high-bred officer, fresh from the gay circles of the British court, could not but be impressed with the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, as they moved with their mighty host, beneath the darkness of night, across the inland waters of this untrodden wilderness. After a few hours of repose, the march was resumed. Lord Howe led the van in a large boat, accompanied with a guard of rangers and boat-men. Lieutenant Holmes was sent forward to reconnoitre the landing-place, and ascertain if the enemy were posted there. He returned at daybreak to the army, then off the

Blue Mountain, within four miles of the landing-place, which he reported to be in possession of the French, as he discovered by their fires. At day-break, Lord Howe proceeded with a few officers to within a quarter of a mile of the landing, to make a personal *reconnoissance*. He found it in possession of the enemy, and returned to aid in the landing of the troops below.

The landing was effected by noon of the 6th, and the rangers were posted on the left wing. After the fatal lesson of Braddock's defeat, the British generals learned the necessity of clearing the woods before the main body, by throwing out the rangers as a flank or advanced guard. On the present occasion Major Rogers was directed to open the way from Lake George to the plains of Ticonderoga. This route was intersected by a creek, crossed by a bridge, which was to be passed by the advancing army. Rogers led the van of the rangers, and Stark their rear, two hundred strong. On approaching the bridge, Rogers perceived it to be occupied by Canadians and Indians. He came to a halt, for a few moments, by which the rear, in full march under Stark, was thrown upon the front. Stark, not comprehending or heeding the cause of the halt, declared "it was no time for delay," and pushed forward to the bridge. The enemy fled before him, and the passage was

left free to the advancing columns. Lord Howe commanded the centre. At the head of his columns, he fell in with a part of the advanced guard of the enemy, which had lost its way in the woods, on the retreat from Lake George. He immediately attacked and dispersed it; but, exposing himself with too much eagerness, he fell at the first fire of the enemy.

This gallant nobleman was in the thirty-fourth year of his age, of the most promising military talents, and greatly endeared by his estimable qualities, to both the British and provincial troops. The General Court of Massachusetts, from respect to his memory, appropriated two hundred and fifty pounds sterling, for the erection of his monument in Westminster Abbey. He was the brother of Sir William Howe, who commanded the British army, in the war of the Revolution. Stark was warmly attached to Lord Howe; and had attracted no little of his notice. They were nearly of an age, and Lord Howe had occasionally joined the midnight scouts of the rangers, to learn their modes of warfare and acquire a knowledge of the country. His death was deeply felt in the army, and by none more truly deplored than by Stark; who lived, however, to find a consolation for the untimely fate of his noble friend, in the reflection, during the progress of the revolutionary war, that, had he lived.

his talents would have been exerted against the patriotic cause.

With this inauspicious event commenced a series of disasters to the British arms. No further progress was made on the 6th; the advanced parties of the American army were called in, and the French kept themselves within their intrenchments. On the morning of the 7th, the American army was again in motion. The rangers were ordered to the post which they had occupied the day before, and Captain Stark, with a strong detachment from the corps, was sent forward, with the aid of the general-in-chief and the chief engineer, to reconnoitre the fort. In the course of the day, the whole army was moved up to the Saw-Mills, the advanced post of the rangers. The party of Captain Stark returned from their *reconnaissance* in the evening, and the whole army passed the night on their arms. All the accounts, as well of the reconnoitring party, as of the prisoners, agreed in representing the force of the French, commanded by the Marquis de Montcalm, as greatly inferior to the English. It consisted of six thousand men, of which eight battalions were regular troops; the rest Canadians and Indians. They were encamped before the fort, and were busily occupied in intrenching themselves behind a breast-work of large trees, felled and piled together to the height of eight or

nine feet, so as to present a front of sharpened branches and interwoven limbs, almost impervious to an advancing enemy. Three thousand men, principally Canadians and French, had been detached by the Marquis de Montcalm to the Mohawk River, to assist the operations in that quarter; but these had been recalled, on the advance of the English, and were expected every hour.

Nothing but an apathy and indecision, difficult to be conceived, sufficiently explain the tardiness of the British movements. Contemporary writers ascribe it to the incapacity of the commander-in-chief, General Abercromby. Stark was ever of opinion, that the disasters of the expedition were in no small degree owing to the fall of Lord Howe. If the British army, after a sufficient *reconnoissance* of the ground, had pushed on at the moment of landing, and before the French, who were without artillery, had had time to intrench themselves within a formidable breast-work of trees, the success of the attack cannot be doubted. But the delay was fatal. On the morning of the 8th, the army was again in motion. At sunrise Sir William Johnson arrived, with a party of four hundred and forty Indians. At seven the troops moved forward, Stark's division of rangers in the van. His lieutenant led the advanced guard, which, within three hun-

dred yards of the intrenchments, was fired upon by a party of French of two hundred men in ambush. The remainder of the rangers came up to support their comrades, and the enemy were driven in. The light infantry now moved up to the right of the rangers, and the batteau men to the left, and continued to skirmish with the advanced parties of the enemy, but without the loss of a man.

While the rangers were thus employed, the main body of the army was forming. At ten o'clock the rangers were ordered to drive in the advanced parties of the enemy, preparatory to a general assault. This service was gallantly performed, and a party of the regular troops moved up to the breast-work. The obstacles which impeded the advance, and the height of the breast-work, did not prevent the attempt to scale it; but Major Proby, who led the pickets engaged in this perilous service, was killed within a few yards of the works. The attempt was repeated several times for four hours. But the trees, which had been piled up on their approach, broke the advancing columns; it was found impossible to carry the breast-work; and the general-in-chief ordered a retreat. It was the duty of the rangers to be the last, as they had been the first, at the post of danger; and Major Rogers and Captain Stark were employed till late

in the evening, in bringing up the rear. There fell on this disastrous and bloody day, five hundred regulars killed and twelve hundred wounded; of the provincials, one hundred killed and two hundred and fifty wounded; leaving the British army still at twice the French force. Notwithstanding this, a precipitate retreat was ordered; the attempt on the fort was abandoned; and by evening the next day, the whole army had returned to their camp, at the south end of Lake George. Here the troops received the thanks of the commanding general, for their good behavior; a compliment which certainly it was not in the power of the army to return to the Commanding General.

No further attempt was made upon Ticonderoga the present season. The disgrace of this repulse was partly redeemed by the success of an expedition against Fort Frontenac, by a party of three thousand, detached under Colonel Broadstreet to the Mohawk. No general operations were attempted by the main army, and the brunt of the service fell upon the rangers, who were engaged in their accustomed duty in observing the enemy, reconnoitring his posts, watching his movements, and waylaying his foraging parties.

Severe battles were frequently fought on these occasions. On the 8th of August an affair of more than ordinary importance took place. A

party of rangers and regulars, amounting in the whole to five or six hundred, had been employed to scour the woods. On their return, they were met by a party of the enemy of about equal force. In the progress of this action Major Israel Putnam, commanding a company of rangers, fell into the hands of the enemy. He was tied to a tree by the Indians, and for a long time was within the fire of both parties, and otherwise exposed to peril and outrage from the savage foe. The particulars of this occurrence, with the subsequent captivity and sufferings of Putnam, form one of the most extraordinary and romantic incidents in American history, and will be particularly narrated in another volume of this work. The field was obstinately contested on both sides. Four several charges were made by the enemy on the rangers; but officers and men maintained their ground with singular firmness and intrepidity, and at the end of an hour the enemy broke and dispersed. About one tenth of the Anglo-American party were killed, wounded, and missing; but of the latter, twenty-one came in the next day.

At the close of this campaign, Captain Stark obtained a furlough; and returning home was married to Elizabeth Page, daughter of Captain Page of Dunbarton. In the spring a new enlistment of rangers was made in New Hamp



shire, and Captain John Stark was again found at the seat of war, at the head of his company. Sir Jeffery Amherst, who, at the close of the last campaign, had distinguished himself by the capture of Louisburg, was now advanced to the chief command of the forces on the Canadian frontier. The plan of the campaign aimed at the acquisition of the entire possessions of France on the American continent. The expedition against Quebec, a leading feature of the plan, consisted of two parts. General Wolfe, with a large force assembled at Louisburg, was to move up the St. Lawrence ; and Sir Jeffery Amherst, after effecting the reduction of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, was to proceed by Lake Champlain and the St. John's into Canada, and unite his arms with those of General Wolfe under the walls of Quebec.

The plan was admirably conceived, and ample means seem to have been at the command of Sir Jeffery Amherst to effect his part of it. But the evil genius of delay appeared to control his movements. It was the 22d of July, before he was prepared to cross Lake George, and move upon Ticonderoga. Captain Stark, as usual, was in the advance with his rangers. The plan of attack was pretty nearly the same as that of the preceding year ; but the forces of the enemy being withdrawn to Quebec, the garrisons were

not sufficiently strong to resist the English army, and successively retreated, without a battle, from Ticonderoga and Crown Point.

Instead of pursuing his success and moving up the lake, Sir Jeffery Amherst deemed it necessary to intrench himself in this quarter, till he could be assured of a superiority on the water, and eventually went into winter-quarters, without making any effort to unite his forces with those of General Wolfe. To this failure on his part, all the embarrassments of that gallant officer's movements before Quebec were ascribed.

As soon as he had taken up the station at Crown Point, General Amherst directed Captain Stark, with two hundred rangers, to open a road from that post to Number Four, on the Connecticut River, a distance of about eighty miles, through an almost pathless wilderness. In consequence of being employed on this arduous service, he was spared the painful necessity of joining Major Rogers, in his expedition against the St. Francis Indians, in which their settlement was burned, and a large portion of the tribe destroyed. This tribe, from its position on the frontier, had, from the earliest settlement of the country, been employed by the French as instruments of havoc and desolation, for the purpose of striking terror into the minds of the British colonists, and preventing their extension to the

north and west. The whole border was filled with traditions of massacre, plunder, and captivity worse than death, suffered by the inhabitants at the hands of the St. Francis Indians ; and now that it was necessary to open the road to Canada, there were no compunctious visitings of conscience, to avert the fate of this feared and hated tribe.

The expedition against them by Rogers, with a detachment of the rangers, was conducted with singular boldness and success ; and the sufferings of his party, on their return, seem almost to exceed the capacity of human endurance. Captain Stark, as we have seen in the early part of this Memoir, had experienced a great deal of kindness from these Indians, during his captivity among them in his youth. His frankness and intrepidity won their favor, and he was adopted as a young warrior into their tribe. He never forgot, through life, the kindness he then received from them ; and although, during the war, of which we have been narrating some of the incidents, he was continually engaged with their hostile scouting parties, he rejoiced, that his detachment upon another service spared him the painful necessity of assisting in their destruction.

After completing the road from Crown Point to Number Four, the army being withdrawn to winter-quarters, Captain Stark returned home. In the spring of 1760, he received orders from Sir

Jeffery Amherst, to direct the recruiting service in the province of New Hampshire. As he does not appear to have been attached to the corps of rangers, which was marched into Canada in the course of the campaign of this year, it is probable he was stationed during the summer at Crown Point.

The events of this year brought the war, in this part of America, to a close. A portion of the rangers were ordered to Detroit, to engage in the military operations in that quarter; but Stark, who had formed domestic relations, deemed himself justified in retiring from the service, to which he had already devoted some of the best years of his life, and of which the substantial objects had been attained, in the reduction of Canada. In addition to this consideration, discontents existed in the minds of the provincial troops. Their officers had reason to complain of the preference claimed and enjoyed by the officers of the British army. The superiority, arrogated by regular troops over colonial forces and especially militia drafts, appeared in its most offensive form on the part of the young Englishmen, who held important commands in the English army, and who manifested toward the Americans the offensive hauteur, which forms so conspicuous a trait in their national character. The rustic manners and uncouth appearance of the provincial corps, many of whom came fresh from the

plough and the workshop to the camp, furnished constant matter of ridicule to the young men, who had received their military education in the drawing rooms of London. To men like Stark, who had passed their youth amidst the hardships of a frontier life, who had served with bravery, conduct, and success, in many a severe campaign, and who felt conscious that they possessed the substantial qualities of the officer, proved in all the hardships and achievements of the actual service, this arrogant assumption of the young men, who had purchased commissions in the English army, was intolerable. He retired from the service, however, in possession of the good will of General Amherst, who, in accepting his resignation, assured him of the continuance of his protection, and promised him that he should resume his rank in the army, whenever he chose to rejoin it.

This it is very likely he would have done, had the war continued; but the restoration of peace left him to the undisturbed pursuit of his private occupations. No event is recorded of public interest, in his life, during the period, which elapsed from the close of the Seven Years' War till the commencement of the Revolution. When the controversy assumed a decided form and seemed drawing to a crisis, a portion of the American officers, who had served with success and honor

in the British army, were drawn, partly it may be supposed under the influence of habits of military subordination, to espouse the royal side. They could not, as men who had received commissions in the British army, who were still in the receipt of their half-pay on the peace establishment, and had been brought up in the habits of uninquiring acquiescence, which belong to military life, conceive of a state of things, in which they could lawfully turn their arms against their sovereign. Under the influence of these feelings, Major Rogers, the famous chief of rangers, under whose command Stark had served in the Seven Years' War, having passed the greater portion of his time in England after the peace of 1763, was induced, on the commencement of hostilities in 1775, to adopt the British side. In like manner, William Stark, the elder brother of the hero of our narrative, in no degree his inferior in courage and hardihood, but possessed of less of the moral firmness of the patriot soldier, was lost to the cause of the Revolution. He had served with reputation as an officer of rangers, had been present at the surrender of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, had assisted in the capture of Louisburg by General Amherst, and had fought with Wolfe at Quebec. At the commencement of the revolutionary war, he applied for the command of one of

the New Hampshire regiments. The General Assembly gave the preference to another colonel, and William Stark listened to the overtures made him by the enemy, and passed into the British service. He became a colonel in the English army, and was killed by a fall from his horse on Long Island. On the eve of his departure for New York, he communicated his intentions to his brother, to whom the same overtures had been made, and urged him to follow his example. But John steadily resisted the proposal, and parted with his brother never to meet again.

These facts are referred to, in order to show, that the course pursued by the gallant and patriotic officers who had distinguished themselves in the Seven Years' War, and who hastened to range themselves on the side of the Revolution, was not a hasty and unreflecting adhesion to the popular cause. They prove that the question was presented to the mind of Stark as one to be deliberately weighed, and that he decided for his country, against the influence of authority and temptation to which many a mind would have yielded, and with the immediate sacrifice of his emoluments as a British officer. His mind, however, was made up from the first. He uniformly maintained the popular side in the great public controversy, which commenced with the attempted establishment of a new colonial system, after

the downfall of the French power on the American continent. He formed the rallying-point of his neighbors and fellow-citizens, and gave the tone to the public sentiment in his vicinity. On the organization of the Committees of Safety in 1774, an organization whose efficiency and extent have not as yet been duly appreciated and set forth, Stark became a member of one of those bodies, for the town in which he lived. In this capacity, he exhibited the strength and wisdom of his character, signalizing his moderation as well as his firmness. He spared no pains to produce a cordial unanimity among the people, and to win over the wavering and disaffected to the popular cause. His military experience enabled him to act with effect, in preparing measures for a vigorous demonstration of strength, when the crisis should arrive.

Careful reflection upon the nature of the art of war will lead us to the conclusion, that the time, at which the revolutionary contest was brought on, was all-important to its success. If, instead of ten or twelve years from the close of the Seven Years' War, a period three or four times as long had elapsed before the commencement of the patriotic struggle, it is manifest, that all the military experience of the colonies would have passed away, and all the confidence and courage inspired by the conscious possession of tried leaders would



have vanished. It is not unlikely, that the recurrence of a war every fifteen or twenty years is absolutely necessary, to keep up the military character of a people, and prevent the traditional portions of the military art, and that skill, which is acquired by actual service, from dying out. Whatever may be thought of this as a general principle, it is notorious that the recent experience of the Seven Years' War had a most salutary influence upon the character of the revolutionary struggle. The officers who had been trained in its arduous campaigns with few exceptions espoused the patriotic cause. So great had been the numbers of those who from 1754 to 1762 had served in every part of the country, from Nova Scotia to Florida, that there was found some one, and often several, of them in every town and settlement throughout the colony, to whom the idea of war, of its alarm, its preparation, its organization, its resources, its exposures, its prizes, was familiar.

Were the records of the Seven Years' War preserved to us, as amply as those of the Revolution, they would probably disclose, to say the least, as great an amount of military service, to which we are now perhaps likely to do but partial justice, for the want of more detailed accounts, and the superior interest attached to the revolutionary annals. But facts which occasionally come to light show the prodigious number of men who were en-

gaged in the military service in that war. In a recent obituary notice of an individual of the town of Grafton in Worcester county, who served in the Seven Years' War, it is stated, that thirty persons from this town were killed in the course of that war. There is no reason to suppose, that Grafton furnished more than its share of soldiers, or that an unusual proportion of those whom it furnished were killed. The population of this town in 1820 was but eleven hundred and fifty-four.

Of those officers of the Seven Years' War, whose experience and character contributed to give the first impulse to the revolutionary struggle, Stark was among the most prompt and efficient. The existing state of things in New Hampshire, as in the other New England colonies, furnished better materials for the speedy organization of a large force, than would at first be supposed. By the old militia law, every male inhabitant, from the age of sixteen to that of sixty, was obliged to be provided with a musket and bayonet, a knapsack, cartridge-box, a pound of powder, twenty bullets, and twelve flints. Every town was obliged to keep in readiness a barrel of powder, two hundred pounds of lead, and three hundred flints for every sixty men; besides a quantity of arms and ammunition for the supply of those, who were unable to provide themselves with the necessary articles. Those persons, who by reason of dignity and sta-

tion were exempt from the discharge of ordinary military duty, were obliged to keep on hand the statutory arms and ammunition. These requisitions were not strictly observed in time of peace, either by the towns or individuals. But Governor Wentworth had a few years before, by the appointment of officers and the review of the regiments, infused new life into the militia system of New Hampshire. The provincial Convention, which assembled at Exeter in January, 1775, in their address to their constituents, exhorted them, among other things, to devote themselves to exercise in the military art, that they might be ready to repel invasion. In pursuance of this exhortation, voluntary associations were formed, among the militia of the province, for the purpose of practice in military manœuvres and drilling, under the command of those whose experience in former wars qualified them for this duty. In addition to all this, the Committees of Inspection and Safety made it their duty, by personal application to every individual, to enforce his preparation for the anticipated struggle. In the discharge of all these voluntary duties, Stark was distinguished for his promptitude, zeal, and influence among his fellow-citizens.

The commencement of hostilities, on the 19th of April, 1775, can hardly be said to have taken the country unprepared. The tidings spread with

rapidity through the continent, and from every part of New England thousands of volunteers rushed to the scene of action. The greater part of the adjacent colonies received the intelligence within twenty-four hours. Within ten minutes after its reception, Stark had mounted his horse, and was on his way toward the sea-coast, having directed the volunteers of his neighborhood to rendezvous at Medford, near Boston. About twelve hundred men hastened, on the first alarm, from those parts of New Hampshire which bordered on Massachusetts, and, in pursuance of the advice of Stark, concentrated themselves at Medford. Of these a portion returned, but enough remained to constitute two regiments, which were organized under the authority of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts. Of the first of these regiments Stark was unanimously elected colonel, Isaac Wyman lieutenant-colonel, and Andrew M'Clary major. The late Major-General Dearborn commanded a company in this regiment. As soon as the Provincial Congress of New Hampshire met, they voted to enlist two thousand men for eight months, of whom the two regiments, already embodied at the theatre of war, were to make a part. The residue formed a third regiment. Colonels Stark and Reed were confirmed in the command of the first two regiments, and Enoch Poor was appointed to the third. The greater part of the

two New Hampshire regiments was stationed at Medford ; but a detachment from them formed a part of the left wing of the army and was posted at Chelsea, and another part, we believe, was stationed near the Inman Farm, at Cambridge. Colonel Stark's quarters were at Medford. Having left home at a few minutes' notice, he went back to New Hampshire, after the organization of the regiment, to arrange his affairs ; and, after two days devoted to that object, returned to his command.

Shortly after rejoining his regiment, he was directed by General Ward to take a small escort and examine Noddle's Island, with a view to ascertain the practicability of establishing a battery there for the annoyance of the British shipping. He repaired to the island with Major M'Clary, a few other officers, and a small party, crossing over from Chelsea. While engaged in reconnoitring the ground, they perceived a party of the enemy, who had landed upon the island with the intention of cutting them off, by getting possession of their boat. After exchanging a few shots, the British party retired, and left Colonel Stark and his companions in the undisturbed possession of their boat.

On the ever memorable seventeenth of June, 1775, Stark's regiment formed the left of the American line. The part of the British troops opposed

to it consisted of the Welsh Fusileers, who had distinguished themselves at the battle of Minden, and were considered one of the finest corps in the English army. It is not our present purpose to relate in detail the entire history of this glorious battle. A fitter opportunity for this attempt may present itself, in connexion with the biography of some one of the distinguished men, who exercised the chief command of the day. But among all who stood forward at this critical conjuncture, and bore their part in a conflict, which exerted an all-important influence upon the fate of the war, none is entitled to higher commendation than Stark. It is related, that when General Gage, reconnoitring the scene of the approaching action from Boston, before the battle commenced, was asked whether he thought the Americans would wait the assault of the royal troops, he replied, that "they would if one John Stark were among them, for he was a brave fellow, and had served under him at Lake George in 1758 and 1759."

Colonel Prescott, who commanded at Bunker's Hill, having perceived at about nine o'clock of the morning of the eventful day the necessity of a reinforcement, despatched Major Brooks to the head-quarters of General Ward at Cambridge, to make a representation to that effect. The matter was referred to a council of war, and by their advice orders were sent to Colonel Stark at Med-

ford to reinforce Colonel Prescott with two hundred men from the New Hampshire troops. This order was promptly obeyed, and the detachment required was sent under Lieutenant-Colonel Wyman to the scene of action. The men were in an imperfect state of preparation for so unexpected a call. Every man was immediately supplied with two flints and with a gill of powder and fifteen balls to make into cartridges. Nearly all of them, however, were unprovided with cartridge-boxes, and made use of powder-horns as a substitute. The guns were of different sizes, and the men were obliged in many cases to hammer their balls to a proper size. At a later hour another order arrived by express, directing Colonel Stark to repair with his whole regiment to Charlestown.

At an early period of the day, Captain Knowlton had been posted with a detachment of Connecticut troops, on the extreme left of the American line behind a rail fence, between the Mystic River and the road. The troops pulled up another fence in the neighborhood, placed it in the ground near that which covered their front, and filled the interval between them with the new-mown grass. A portion of this fence had a low stone wall beneath it. The whole formed a very inadequate breast-work. On the arrival of the New Hampshire troops at the scene of action (which was after the British troops and reinforcements had

landed in Charlestown, but before their advance from the place of disembarkation commenced), a portion of them were detached by General Putnam to work upon the intrenchments of Bunker's Hill, properly so called. The residue, under their Colonels, Stark and Reed, were ordered to take post at Captain Knowlton's position just described. On receiving this order, Colonel Stark made a brief and animated address to his men, and marched them off to the station designated. He had not precipitated his march from Medford, distant about five miles from the heights of Charlestown, and accordingly brought his men to the ground unexhausted and vigorous, justly stating that "one fresh man in battle is better than ten who are fatigued."

The British right wing, consisting of the fifth regiment, a regiment of grenadiers, and one of light infantry, moved forward to the attack of the Americans behind the rail fence, a portion of the light companies at the same time attempting to turn the extreme left of the American line. General Howe commanded on this portion of the field. The general order given to the American troops, to reserve their fire till the near approach of the enemy, had been repeated and enforced by Stark. This order was strictly obeyed, so that when his men threw in their volley, the veterans of the British army recoiled before it. The same



result was produced by the destructive fire from within the redoubt and along the line upon the declivity of the hill, and compelled the enemy precipitately to fall back. A second and third charge were followed by the same effect ; nor was it till the British army, strengthened by powerful reinforcements, was brought up for a fourth time to the assault, that they succeeded in forcing from the field the scanty numbers opposed to them, of whom many were exhausted by the labors of the preceding night, and of the day passed without refreshment.

In the heat of the action it was reported to Colonel Stark that his son, a young man of sixteen who had followed him to the field, had just been killed. He remarked to the person, who brought him the information, that it was not the moment to talk of private affairs, when the enemy was in force in front ; and ordered him back to his duty. The report, however, proved erroneous, and his son served through the war as a staff-officer.

After the fate of the day was decided, Stark drew off his regiment in such order that he was not pursued. The following extract from a letter written by him the second day after the battle deserves preservation, as an authentic document relative to this most important event.

"TO THE HON. MATTHEW THORNTON, EXETER.

"Medford, June 19, 1775.

"SIR,

"I embrace this opportunity by Colonel Holland, to give you some particulars of an engagement, which was fought on the 17th instant, between the British troops and the Americans.

"On the 16th at evening, a detachment of the Massachusetts line marched, by the General's order, to make an intrenchment upon a hill in Charlestown, called Charlestown Hill, near Boston, where they intrenched that night without interruption, but were attacked on the morning of the 17th very warmly, by the ships of war in Charlestown River and the batteries in Boston. Upon this, I was ordered by the General, to send a detachment of two hundred men with proper officers to their assistance, which order I promptly obeyed, and appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Wyman to command the same. At two o'clock in the afternoon, an express arrived for my whole regiment to proceed to Charlestown to oppose the British, who were landing on Charlestown Point. Accordingly we proceeded and the battle soon came on, in which a number of officers and men of my regiment were killed and wounded. The officers killed were Major M'Clary by a cannon-ball, and Captain Baldwin and Lieutenant Scott by small arms.

“The whole number, including officers,  
killed and missing . . . . . 15

“Wounded . . . . . 45

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“Total killed, wounded, and missing . . . 60

“By Colonel Reed’s desire, I transmit the account of those who suffered, belonging to that portion of his regiment, who were engaged, viz.

“Killed . . . . . 3

“Wounded . . . . . 29

“Missing . . . . . 1

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33

“Total in both regiments . . . . . 93

“But we remain in good spirits, being well satisfied, that where we have lost one, the enemy have lost three.

“I am, Sir, with great respect,

Yours and the country’s

to serve, in a good cause,

“JOHN STARK.”

The fate of Major M’Clary demands a brief commemoration. He was a person of commanding stature and Stentorian voice, which was heard amidst the roar of the cannon and musketry, exhorting his men to the discharge of their duty. After the retreat, he hastened to Medford to procure a supply of dressings for the wounded. Re-

turning on this benevolent errand, he crossed again over Charlestown Neck to reconnoitre the British troops, which had now taken possession of the heights. Having accomplished that object, he was on his way back to join the retreat of his regiment in company with Lieutenant-Colonel Robinson, Captain Dearborn, and other officers. To some remark made on the danger of crossing the neck, he replied, "The ball is not yet cast, which is commissioned to kill me." At that moment, a shot from the Glasgow destroyed him. Captain Baldwin, another meritorious officer in Stark's regiment, who fell on this occasion, had fought in twenty battles in the former wars. On no part of the line was the execution greater, than on that, where the New Hampshire troops were stationed. In an account sent from the British army, bearing date, Boston, 5th July, 1775, and published in London, we are told that the British light infantry were moved up "in companies against the grass fence, but could not penetrate it. Indeed, how could we penetrate it? Most of our grenadiers and light infantry, the moment of presenting themselves, lost three-fourths and many nine-tenths of their men. Some had only eight or nine men in a company left, some only three, four, or five." \*

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\* Detail and conduct of the American War. London. 1780. p. 13.

On the retreat from Bunker's Hill, our troops took post upon the heights in the neighborhood ; the regiment of Stark on Winter Hill. The night succeeding the battle and the following day were passed in the labor of intrenching ; but the experience of the 19th of April and the 17th of June deterred the British troops from any repetition of the attempt to penetrate into the interior, in this portion of the country. No important movement was made, on either side, for the rest of the season. At the close of the year the term for which the men had engaged had generally expired, and a reënlistment became necessary. Colonel Stark met with extraordinary success in engaging his men to continue in the service, and in a few days his regiment was again full.

While the regiment of Stark was stationed at Winter Hill, an incident occurred, strikingly illustrative of his character. It is related in his Memoirs on the authority of the late Major Dow of Hampton Falls. The person, who had been appointed paymaster of the New Hampshire line, was unfriendly to Colonel Stark, and endeavored to embarrass the payment of his men, in order to create disaffection in the regiment. The troops were marched by companies, to receive their pay, to Medford, where the paymaster had stationed himself. He refused to pay them, on

the ground that their pay-rolls were not made out in proper form. The men, highly dissatisfied, returned to their encampment ; and the next day marched again to Medford, with new pay-rolls, made out (it was supposed) in the strictest form, but payment was again refused. The same thing was repeated on the third day ; and the soldiers returned, ripe for mutiny, to the camp. They besieged the Colonel's quarters clamoring for payment. Colonel Stark was provoked at the vexatious delays, interposed by the paymaster, and declared that "as the regiment had made him three visits, he should make them one in return." He accordingly despatched a sergeant's guard, arrested the paymaster at his quarters in Medford, and brought him to camp, to the tune of the Rogue's March. On examination he could point out no fault in the roll, and the men were paid. Colonel Stark's conduct was submitted to a court of inquiry ; but the paymaster had fallen, meantime, under strong suspicion of being a defaulter, and found it advisable to quit the army. The court of inquiry deemed it inexpedient to pursue the affair.

A portion of the officers and men in Stark's regiment had, in the course of the summer of 1775, enlisted as volunteers in the expedition, which was undertaken by direction of General Washington, under the command of Arnold, to

penetrate, by the way of the Kennebec, into Canada. Dearborn (a Major-General in the war of 1812), a distinguished Captain in Stark's regiment, shared the almost unexampled hardships of this march. Colonel Stark himself remained at his station on Winter Hill, till the evacuation of Boston by the British, in the month of March, 1776.

On the occurrence of that event, a small detachment of the army was left at Boston, under the command of General Ward, to complete the erection of the works there begun; while the main body marched to New York, under the command of General Washington. The regiment of Stark was among the troops, who proceeded to New York, and their Colonel was assiduously employed on his arrival under the orders of the commander-in-chief, in strengthening the defences of that place. In the month of May, his regiment was ordered to proceed, by the way of Albany, to join the American army in Canada. Stark came up with the army at St. John's, and thence advanced to the mouth of the river Sorel. The bold and not ill-conceived expedition against Canada, one of the earliest and most favorite projects of the Continental Congress, was now drawing to a close. The utmost that could be hoped was to prevent its being precipitated to a disastrous termination. General

Thomas had died of the small-pox at Sorel, after having raised the siege of Quebec, and retreated to that place. General Sullivan succeeded him in the command, and this circumstance, with the arrival of reinforcements, which raised the entire force of the Americans to four or five thousand men, gave new hopes of retrieving the fortunes of the expedition. General Sullivan deemed it expedient to execute the project of an attack upon the enemy's post at Three Rivers, suggested by Colonel St. Clair, and approved by General Thompson, who, for a few days, during the illness of General Thomas, had the command at Sorel.\* Stark remonstrated, in a council of war, against this expedition, as one requiring for its success a naval superiority upon the river, and the concurrence of too many contingent circumstances. But, it having been decided to pursue the attack, the principles of duty, which governed him while in the service, prompted him to contribute all in his power to its successful issue. The result, as is well known, was unfortunate.

On the return to Sorel of those, who escaped from the disaster of Three Rivers, it became necessary for the American army to retire from Canada. The retreat was conducted by General Sullivan with skill, in the face of a superior and

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\* St. Clair's *Narrative*, p. 235.



triumphant force of the enemy. In fact it had been the wish of this commander to defend the post of Sorel ; but he was overruled, in this rash purpose, by the unanimous opinion of his officers. It was but a few hours before the appearance of the enemy, that he was finally prevailed upon, by a council of war, to retire. The pursuit was not continued beyond Isle-aux-Noix, the Americans having the command of Lake Champlain. But, though unmolested by the enemy, the army of General Sullivan suffered severely by the small-pox. After passing the Lake, the regiment of Stark was stationed at Chimney Point, on the side of the Lake opposite to Crown-Point, where the remainder of the army was posted. Here it was the opinion of Colonel Stark, that the army should make a stand. General Schuyler, who had assumed the command of the army, and all the general officers under him, thought otherwise, and it was determined in a council of war to fall back to Ticonderoga, contrary to the advice of several of the subordinate officers, who deemed it essential, for the protection of the country on the borders of the Lake, to hold Crown Point. This opinion they set forth in a written memorial addressed to the General, but without effect. On the 6th and 7th of July, 1776, the army reached Ticonderoga. On the following day, the Declaration of Independence was re-

ceived and proclaimed to the army, who hailed it with shouts of applause. The regiment of Stark was stationed on a hill, distant about two miles from the fort, and which was named Mount Independence, in honor of the memorable event, which had just been proclaimed. Thus had Colonel Stark the satisfaction, on the theatre of his former military exploits, and sixteen years after he had been present with General Amherst at the taking of Ticonderoga from the French, to hear the Independence of his country proclaimed, at the head of a patriotic army. In a short period the command of the post devolved on General Gates. Upon his arrival at headquarters, a reorganization of the army took place, and Colonel Stark was appointed to the command of a brigade, with orders to clear and fortify Mount Independence, then a wilderness.

Nothing further of importance occurred on the northern frontier, in the course of the season. After the disastrous occurrences in New York, General Gates was ordered to reinforce General Washington on the right bank of the Delaware. The regiment of Colonel Stark was among the troops, detached from the northern army for this purpose; and reached the head-quarters of the Commander-in-chief on the 20th of December. By this reinforcement the army of General Washington was swelled to about seven thousand

effective men. This was a period of deep and general despondency, and Washington felt the necessity of striking a bold stroke, which might have the effect of changing the gloomy aspect of affairs, and reviving the spirits of the country. In this design, an attack on all the enemy's posts upon the left bank of the Delaware was projected. Owing to the inclemency of the weather, and the state of the river, some portions of this plan miscarried; but that part of it, which was to be executed under the direct command of Washington, the attack upon Trenton, was completely successful. In this attack, General Sullivan commanded the right wing, and Stark, with his regiment, led the vanguard, and contributed his full share to this brilliant enterprise, in which twenty of the enemy were killed, and nearly one thousand made prisoners. On the part of the Americans, two persons only were killed, and four or five wounded. But the fact, that two were also frozen to death, shows the rigor of the night, under cover of which this *coup de main* was executed. On the eve of this affair, Colonel Stark, in allusion to the spirit, with which the contest had hitherto been carried on, as a war of posts and intrenchments, rather than of battles, thus expressed himself to the General; "Your men have long been accustomed to place dependence upon spades and pickaxes for safety.

But if you ever mean to establish the Independence of the United States, you must teach them to rely upon their fire-arms." Washington replied, "This is what we have agreed upon. We are to march to-morrow upon Trenton; you are to command the right wing of the advanced guard, and General Greene the left." The Colonel rejoined, that he could not have been assigned to a more acceptable station.

Colonel Stark accompanied Washington, when, a few days afterwards, he again crossed the Delaware. He was with him in the battle at Princeton, and remained with the army till the establishment of the head-quarters of General Washington at Morristown. The term for which his men had enlisted had expired before these last brilliant efforts of the American commander-in-chief. Stark, however, proposed to them a reënlistment for a short period; and his personal influence with his regiment induced them to a man to enter into a new engagement for six weeks. It was not easy, in the critical state of affairs at the time, to render a more important service to the country.

But, as this new enlistment was but for a few weeks, it became necessary to make a more permanent provision to recruit the ranks of the regiment. He was accordingly ordered to New Hampshire to perform that service. By the month of March, 1777, he had discharged the

duty so successfully, that his regiment was full. He immediately communicated this intelligence to the Council of New Hampshire and to General Washington. He repaired to Exeter to receive instructions from the authorities of New Hampshire, who were there assembled. While there he was informed, that a new list of promotions had been made, in which his name was omitted, and those of junior officers were found. He ascribed this neglect of what he conceived his just claims, to the unfriendly interposition of some officers of high rank and members of Congress. It was impossible for a man of his lofty spirit and unbending character to acquiesce in what he considered an injurious disregard of his fair pretensions to advancement. He immediately appeared before the Council, and also waited upon the Generals Sullivan and Poor. He stated the grounds of his dissatisfaction and his determination to retire from the army. Wishing them all possible success in the service of the country, he surrendered his commission and returned home, without any expectation of entering again into the ranks of the army. But, though dissatisfied with his own treatment, he was in no degree disaffected to the cause. He fitted out for the army all the members of his family, who were old enough to join it, and continued, as heretofore, by every means except his personal services

in the field, to promote the great cause of his country.

The retirement of Colonel Stark was not viewed with indifference. Generals Sullivan and Poor endeavored to dissuade him from executing his purpose. But he declared that an officer, who would not maintain his rank and assert his own rights, could not be trusted to vindicate those of his country. At the same time he pointed out to them the dangerous situation of Ticonderoga and the necessity of immediate relief, if the northern frontier was to be protected; and he declared his readiness again to take the field, whenever his country should require his services. On his resignation, the Council and House of Delegates of New Hampshire expressed their sense of the value of his services, by the following vote, passed the 21st of March, 1777. "Voted, that the thanks of both Houses in convention be given to Colonel Stark for his good services in the present war; and that, from his early and steadfast attachment to the cause of his country, they make not the least doubt that his future conduct, in whatever state of life Providence may place him, will manifest the same noble disposition of mind." On the passage of this vote, the thanks of both Houses were presented to him by the President.

The time was fast approaching, when the confidence here expressed in the patriotism of Colonel Stark was to be justified in the most signal and gratifying manner. The war on the northern frontier had thus far been little else than a succession of disasters, and the summer of 1777 seemed likely to be distinguished by calamities not less distressing than those, which had attended the invasion of Canada. A formidable army was penetrating the States from Canada, and the plan of the campaign, as far as it was developed, threatened a junction of the force of Burgoyne with that of Sir William Howe, which would have effectually broken the States into two feeble and disconnected portions. The retreat of the American army from Ticonderoga, on the approach of Burgoyne, while it filled the public mind with dismay, as the surrender of a position on which the safety of the north depended, was regarded with gloomy apprehension, as the prelude to further reverses. The mind of Washington, however, by a happy forecast perceived a gleam of hope, even in this hour of despondence, and with a sort of prophetic skill seems to have foretold, with extraordinary precision, the auspicious change of affairs which was in store. In reply to a letter of General Schuyler, of the 17th of July, communicating the unfavorable state and prospects of the army, he says, "Though our

affairs have for some days past worn a gloomy aspect, yet I look forward to a happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet sooner or later an effectual check ; and, as I suggested before, that the success he has had will precipitate his ruin. From your accounts, he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct, which, of all others, is most favorable to us, I mean acting in detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy as to cut one of them off, though it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspire the people and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an event they would lose sight of past misfortunes, and, urged at the same time by a regard for their own security, they would fly to arms and afford every aid in their power."

It must be confessed that it required no ordinary share of fortitude, to find topics of consolation in the present state of affairs. The British were advancing with a well-appointed army into the heart of the country, under the conduct, as it was supposed, of the most skilful officers, confident of success and selected to finish the war. The army consisted in part of German troops, veterans of the Seven Years' War, under the command of a general of experience, conduct, and



valor. Nothing could have been more ample than the military supplies, the artillery, munitions, and stores, with which the army was provided. A considerable force of Canadians and American loyalists furnished the requisite spies, scouts, and rangers; and a numerous force of savages in their war dresses, with their peculiar weapons and native ferocity, increased the terrors of its approach. Its numbers were usually rated at ten thousand strong.

On the evacuation of Ticonderoga, and the further advance of such an army, the New England States, and particularly New Hampshire and Massachusetts, were filled with alarm. It was felt that their frontier was uncovered, and that strenuous and extraordinary efforts for the protection of the country were necessary. In New Hampshire, as being nearer the scene of danger, a proportionably greater anxiety was felt. The Committee of Safety of what was then called the New Hampshire Grants, the present State of Vermont, wrote in the most pressing terms to the New Hampshire Committee of Safety at Exeter, apprizing them, that, if assistance should not be sent to them, they should be forced to abandon the country and take refuge east of the Connecticut River. When these tidings reached Exeter, the Assembly had finished their spring session and had gone home. A summons from the Commit-

tee brought them together again, and in three days they took the most effectual and decisive steps for the defence of the country. Among the patriotic members of the Assembly, who signalized themselves on this occasion, none was more conspicuous than the late Governor Langdon. The members of that body were inclined to despond ; the public credit was exhausted ; and there were no means of supporting troops, if they could be raised. Meantime the defences of the frontier had fallen, and the enemy, with overwhelming force, was penetrating into the country. At this gloomy juncture, John Langdon, a merchant of Portsmouth, and speaker of the Assembly, thus addressed its members ;

“I have three thousand dollars in hard money ; I will pledge my plate for three thousand more ; I have seventy hogsheads of Tobago rum, which shall be sold for the most it will bring. These are at the service of the state. If we succeed in defending our firesides and homes, I may be remunerated ; if we do not, the property will be of no value to me. Our old friend Stark, who so nobly maintained the honor of our state at Bunker’s Hill, may be safely intrusted with the conduct of the enterprise, and we will check the progress of Burgoyne.”

This proposal infused life into the measures of the Assembly. They formed the whole militia

of the State into two brigades. Of the first they gave the command to William Whipple, of the second to John Stark. They ordered one fourth part of Stark's brigade and one fourth of three regiments of Whipple's to march immediately under the command of Stark, "to stop the progress of the enemy on our western frontiers." They ordered the militia officers to take away arms from all persons, who scrupled or refused to assist in defending the country; and appointed a day of fasting and prayer, which was observed with great solemnity.

But it was in the selection of the commander, who was to direct these measures of protection, that the great hope of the people, under Providence, rested. Stark was now called upon, sooner than he had anticipated, to digest his private griefs and hasten to the defence of his country. Knowing the confidence reposed in his firmness, fortitude, and military experience by all classes of the community, the Assembly deemed their work of preparation unfinished, till they could hold out his name, as the rallying-point to the people. Deeply wounded by the occurrences of the spring, he refused at first to accept the command of the troops; but consented at length to assume it, on condition, that he should not be obliged to join the main army, but be allowed to hang upon the wings of the enemy in the New Hampshire

Grants, and to exercise his own discretion as to his movements, accountable to no one but the authorities of New Hampshire. His conditions were complied with, and he was, in the language of the original orders, directed to repair with a separate command, "to Charlestown on Connecticut river ; there to consult with a committee from the New Hampshire Grants, respecting his future operations, and the supply of his men with provisions ; to take the command of the militia and march into the Grants ; to act in conjunction with the troops of that new State, or any other of the States, or the United States, or separately, as it should appear expedient to him, for the protection of the people and the annoyance of the enemy."

The appearance of their favorite commander filled the people with spirits. The militia took the field without hesitation. In a few days Stark proceeded to Charlestown ; and, as fast as his men came in, he sent them forward to join the troops of the Grants under Colonel Warner, who had taken post at Manchester, twenty miles to the north of Bennington. Here Stark soon joined him, and met with General Lincoln, who had been sent from Stillwater by General Schuyler, commander of the northern department, to conduct the militia to the west bank of the Hudson. Stark communicated the orders, under which he was acting from the authorities of New Hamp-

shire, stated his views of the dangerous consequences, to the people of Vermont, of removing his force from their borders, and declined obedience to General Schuyler's command. General Lincoln made known to General Schuyler and to Congress the result of his application. On the 19th of August, 1777, that body resolved, "that a copy of General Lincoln's letter be forthwith transmitted to the Council of New Hampshire, and that they be informed that the instructions, which General Stark says he received from them, are destructive of military subordination, and highly prejudicial to the common cause at this crisis; and that therefore they be desired to instruct General Stark to conform himself to the same rules which other General officers of the militia are subject to, whenever they are called out at the expense of the United States." Notwithstanding this disapprobation of the course pursued by General Stark and the correctness of the principles involved in the resolution of Congress, the refusal of the General to march his troops to the west of the Hudson was founded upon the soundest views of the state of things, and was productive of inestimable benefits to the country, as the event soon proved.

The levy of the militia, to which we have alluded, was ordered by the Assembly of New Hampshire, on a general consideration of the exposed condition of the western frontier of the State

after the abandonment of Ticonderoga by the American army. But events speedily occurred which showed the wisdom of these measures of preparation. At the very period when they were completed, General Burgoyne, filled with an overweening confidence in his superior strength, and greatly deceived as to the extent of the royalist party in the Colonies, disregarding the advice of Baron Riedesel, the commander-in-chief of the German troops, detached Colonel Baum, with a party of six hundred men on an expedition, the object of which was, in the first sentence of the instructions given by General Burgoyne to the commander, stated to be, "to try the affections of the country, to disconcert the councils of the enemy, to mount Riedesel's dragoons, to complete Peters's corps (of loyalists), and to obtain large supplies of cattle, horses, and carriages." \*

These instructions bear date the 9th of August, and the detachment of Baum was put in motion, about the time of Stark's arrival at Bennington. The Commander-in-chief of the American army, probably apprized of this movement of the enemy,

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\* The original of these instructions came into the possession of General Lincoln, and was by him deposited in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society. A copy of the document is found in their Collections, First Series, Vol. II. p. 25.

perceived the wisdom of Stark's dispositions, and approved his plan of operations. On the 13th of August, information reached General Stark, that a party of Indians attached to Baum's force had been perceived at Cambridge, about twelve miles northwest from Bennington. He immediately detached Lieutenant-Colonel Gregg, with two hundred men, to stop their march. In the course of the night, he was advised by express, that a large body of the enemy, with a train of artillery, was in the rear of the Indians, in full march for Bennington. He immediately rallied his brigade, with all the militia which had collected at Bennington. Orders were at the same time despatched to the officer in command of Colonel Warner's regiment at Manchester, to march that body of men down to Bennington, and an animated call was made upon all the neighboring militia. These various dispositions were carried promptly into effect.

On the morning of the 14th, Stark moved forward to the support of Colonel Gregg, with the entire force under his command. At the distance of four or five miles, he met the Colonel in full retreat, and the enemy within a mile of him. Stark instantly halted, and drew up his men in order of battle. The enemy, perceiving that he had taken a stand, immediately came to a halt on very advantageous ground and there intrenched themselves. Unable to draw them from their po-

sition, he fell back for a mile, leaving only a small party to skirmish with the enemy. This was done with considerable effect. Thirty of their force, with two Indian chiefs, were killed or wounded, without any loss on the American side.

The following day, the 15th, was rainy, and nothing was attempted beyond skirmishing with the enemy. This was done with spirit, and the Indians began to desert the army of Colonel Baum, "because," as they said, "the woods were filled with Yankees." This respite enabled the enemy to complete their breast-works, to apprize General Burgoyne of their situation, and to ask for reinforcements. Colonel Breyman, with an additional body of German troops, was immediately detached to the assistance of Baum.

On the morning of the 16th, General Stark was joined by Colonel Symonds, with a body of Berkshire militia, and made preparations for an attack, according to a plan proposed by the General and agreed upon in a council of war.

The German troops with their battery were advantageously posted upon a rising ground at a bend in the Wollamsac (a tributary of the Hoosac) on its north bank. The ground fell off to the north and west, a circumstance of which Stark skilfully took advantage. Peters's corps of Tories were intrenched on the other side of the stream, in lower ground, and nearly in front of



the German battery. The little river, that meanders through the scene of the action, is fordable in all places. Stark was encamped upon the same side of it as the Germans, but, owing to its serpentine course, it crossed his line of march twice on his way to their position. Their post was carefully reconnoitred at a mile's distance, and the plan of attack was arranged in the following manner. Colonel Nichols, with two hundred men, was detached to attack the rear of the enemy's left, and Colonel Herrick, with three hundred men, to fall upon the rear of their right, with orders to form a junction before they made the assault. Colonels Hubbard and Stickney were also ordered to advance with two hundred men on their right and one hundred in front, to divert their attention from the real point of attack. The action commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon on the rear of the enemy's left, when Colonel Nichols, with great precision, carried into effect the dispositions of the commander. His example was followed by every other portion of the little army. General Stark himself moved forward slowly in front, till he heard the sound of the guns from Colonel Nichols's party, when he rushed upon the Tories, and in a few moments the action became general. "It lasted," says Stark, in his official report, "two hours, and was the hottest I ever saw. It was like one continued clap of thunder." The

Indians, alarmed at the prospect of being enclosed between the parties of Nichols and Herrick, fled at the commencement of the action, their main principle of battle array being to contrive or to escape an ambush or an attack in the rear. The Tories were soon driven over the river, and were thus thrown in confusion on the Germans, who were forced from their breast-work. Baum made a brave and resolute defence. The German dragoons, with the discipline of veterans, preserved their ranks unbroken, and, after their ammunition was expended, were led to the charge by their Colonel with the sword; but they were overpowered and obliged to give way, leaving their artillery and baggage on the field.

They were well enclosed in two breast-works, which, owing to the rain on the 15th, they had constructed at leisure. But notwithstanding this protection, with the advantage of two pieces of cannon, arms and ammunition in perfect order, and an auxiliary force of Indians, they were driven from their intrenchments by a band of militia just brought to the field, poorly armed, with few bayonets, without field-pieces, and with little discipline. The superiority of numbers, on the part of the Americans, will, when these things are considered, hardly be thought to abate any thing from the praise due to the conduct of the commander, or the spirit and courage of his men.

The enemy being driven from the field, the militia dispersed to collect the plunder. Scarcely had they done so, before intelligence was brought, that a large reinforcement from the British army was on the march, and within two miles' distance. This was the corps of Colonel Breyman, already mentioned, which had been despatched by General Burgoyne on receiving from Baum intelligence of his position. The rain of the preceding day and the badness of the roads had delayed his arrival; a circumstance which exercised a very important influence on the fate of the battle. On the approach of Breyman's reinforcements, the flying party of Baum made a rally, and the fortune of the day was for a moment in suspense. Stark made an effort to rally the militia; but happily at this juncture Colonel Warner's regiment came up fresh and not yet engaged, and fell with vigor upon the enemy.

This regiment, since the battle fought at Hubbardston, had been stationed at Manchester. It had been reduced, by the loss sustained in that action, to less than two hundred men. Warner, their Colonel, as we have seen, was at Bennington and was with General Stark on the 14th. The regiment at Manchester was under the command of Major Samuel Safford. In consequence of the absence of a large number of the men on a scouting party, and other causes, it was not pos-

sible to put the regiment in motion on the 14th ; on the 15th they marched for Bennington. Owing to the heavy rain of that day, it was near midnight, when the troops arrived within a mile of Bennington. Fatigued with the march of the preceding day, their arms and equipments injured by the rain, and their ammunition scanty, a considerable portion of the ensuing day was exhausted, before the men could prepare themselves for battle. The first assault had been made in the manner described, and the enemy driven from the field, before this regiment came into action. At the most critical moment of the day, when the arrival of Breyman's reinforcement threatened a reverse of its good fortune, Warner's troops appeared in the field.\* Stark, with what men he had

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\* Some confusion on the subject of Warner's regiment exists in the histories, and has probably perplexed most readers of the accounts of the battle. General Stark, in his official letter to General Gates, expressly states that Warner was with him on the 14th ; and Gordon and others correctly follow this authority. But yet it is also stated, that Warner's regiment came up fresh after the first action of the 16th. The Editor of the Memoir appears to have thought there must have been an error in the official account of the events of the 14th, which he seems accordingly to have altered by omitting the names of Warner, Herrick, and Brush as being with Stark on that day. I have followed, however, a copy of Stark's letter, made from the original among Gates's papers, now in

been able to rally, pushed forward to his assistance, and the battle was contested with great obstinacy on both sides till sunset, when the enemy were obliged to give way. General Stark pursued their flying forces till dark, and was obliged to draw off his men, to prevent them from firing upon each other under cover of night. "With one hour more of daylight," as he observes in his official report, "he would have captured the whole body." The fruits of the victory were four pieces of brass cannon, several hundred stand of arms, eight brass drums, a quantity of German broad swords, and about seven hundred prisoners. Two hundred and seven were killed upon the spot ; the number of the wounded was not ascertained. Colonel Baum was wounded and made a prisoner, but shortly after died of his wounds. The loss of the Americans was thirty killed and forty wounded. The General's horse was killed in the action.

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the archives of the New York Historical Society. The facts mentioned in the text explain this difficulty. The accounts generally state, that Warner's regiment came up "fresh from Manchester," on the afternoon of the 16th. This is not correct. That regiment, as we have seen, arrived very late the night before, drenched with rain ; and the time required to dry their arms and prepare ammunition, after the march of the 15th, accounts for their coming so late into action on the 16th. I am indebted for the knowledge of this fact, and of others, illustrative of the action, to Mr. Hiland Hall, of Bennington, member of Congress from Vermont.

Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the conduct of those, who gained the battle of Bennington, officers and men. It is perhaps the most conspicuous example of the performance by militia of all that is expected of regular, veteran troops. The fortitude and resolution, with which the lines at Bunker's Hill were maintained, by recent recruits, against the assault of a powerful army of experienced soldiers, have always been regarded with admiration. But at Bennington the hardy yeomen of New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, many of them fresh from the plough and unused to the camp, "advanced," as General Stark expresses it in his official letter, "through fire and smoke, and mounted breast-works, that were well fortified and defended with cannon."

Fortunately for the success of the battle, Stark was most ably seconded by the officers under him ; every previous disposition of his little force was most faithfully executed. He expresses his particular obligations to Colonels Warner and Herrick, "whose superior skill was of great service to him." Indeed the battle was planned and fought with a degree of military talent and science, which would have done no discredit to any service in Europe. A higher degree of discipline might have enabled the General to check the eagerness of his men to possess themselves of the spoils of victory ; but his ability, even

in that moment of dispersion and under the flush of success, to meet and conquer a hostile reinforcement, evinces a judgment and resource not often equalled in partisan warfare.

In fact it would be the height of injustice not to recognise, in this battle, the marks of the master mind of the leader, which makes good officers and good soldiers out of any materials, and infuses its own spirit into all that surround it. This brilliant exploit was the work of Stark, from its inception to its achievement. His popular name called the militia together. His resolute will obtained him a separate commission, — at the expense, it is true, of a wise political principle, — but on the present occasion, with the happiest effect. His firmness prevented him from being overruled by the influence of General Lincoln, which would have led him, with his troops, across the Hudson. How few are the men, who in such a crisis would not merely not have sought, but actually have repudiated, a junction with the main army! How few, who would not only have desired, but actually insisted on taking the responsibility of separate action! Having chosen the burden of acting alone, he acquitted himself in the discharge of his duty, with the spirit and vigor of a man, conscious of ability proportioned to the crisis. He advanced against the enemy with promptitude; sent forward a small force to recon-

noitre and measure his strength ; chose his ground deliberately and with skill ; planned and fought the battle with gallantry and success. Pointing out the enemy to his soldiers, he declared to them, that “ he would gain the victory over them in the approaching battle, or Molly Stark should be a widow that night.” And this victory was gained by the simple force of judicious dispositions of his men, bravely executed.

The consequences of this battle were of great importance. It animated the hearts of the people, more than fulfilling, in this respect, the happy prediction of Washington. But its immediate effects were of the first moment. It not only cost the army of Burgoyne more than one thousand of his best troops, but it wholly deranged the plan of his campaign, and materially contributed to the loss of his army. By advancing beyond Ticonderoga, his communication with the country in his rear was interrupted. He relied on these lateral excursions to keep the population in alarm and to prevent their flocking to Gates. He also depended on procuring his supplies by such inroads into the country. The catastrophe of Baum’s expedition, by which he hoped to furnish himself with an ample store of provisions collected at Bennington, disappointed that expectation, and compelled him to halt, till he could procure them in detail from other quarters, and thus retarded his advance



toward Albany for a month, during all which time the militia poured to the standard of General Gates, and placed him in a condition, to compel the surrender of the British army. In the Memoir of Baron Riedesel's expedition, written by the Baroness, it is stated that this judicious officer strongly remonstrated against despatching Baum, and the event of the expedition is declared "to have paralyzed at once the operations of the British army."

General Stark, on the achievement of his victory, communicated the intelligence of it to General Gates, by a letter bearing date three days after the battle. He also transmitted official information of it to the State authorities of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont, whose troops were engaged with him in the contest. To each of these three States he sent trophies of the battle, — brazen drums, muskets, and swords taken from the field.

The following is a copy of General Stark's letter, accompanying the trophies sent by him to the Assembly of Massachusetts, and copied from the original in the public archives at Boston.

"Bennington, September 15th, 1777.

"General Stark begs leave to present to the State of the Massachusetts Bay, and pray their acceptance of the same, one Hessian gun and bayonet, one broad sword, one brass-barrelled drum,

and one grenadier's cap, taken from the enemy, in the memorable battle, fought at Wallomsac, on the 16th of August last ; and requests that the same may be kept in commemoration of that glorious victory, obtained over the enemy that day, by the united troops of that State, those of New Hampshire, and Vermont, which victory ought to be kept in memory, and handed down to futurity, as a lasting and laudable example for the sons and daughters of the victors, in order never to suffer themselves to become the prey of those mercenary tyrants and British sycophants, who are daily endeavoring to ruin and destroy us."

The General Court of Massachusetts was not in session on the receipt of this letter, and did not meet till the next December. On the 12th of that month, the following letter was addressed to General Stark, in behalf of the Assembly.

" Boston, 12th of December, 1777.

" SIR,

" The General Assembly of this State take the earliest opportunity, to acknowledge the receipt of your acceptable present, — the tokens of victory at the memorable battle of Bennington.

" The events of that day strongly mark the bravery of the men, who, unskilled in war, forced from their intrenchments a chosen number of veteran troops, of boasted Britons ; as well as the ad-

dress and valor of the General, who directed their movements and led them on to conquest. This signal exploit opened the way to a rapid succession of advantages most important to America.

“ These trophies shall be safely deposited in the archives of the State, and there remind posterity of the irresistible power of the God of armies, and the honors due to the memory of the brave.

“ Still attended with like successes, may you long enjoy the just rewards of a grateful country.”

Together with this letter the following resolution was adopted.

“ Resolved unanimously, that the Board of War of this State be and they hereby are directed, in the name of this Court, to present to the honorable Brigadier-General Stark a complete suit of clothes becoming his rank, together with a piece of linen; as a testimony of the high sense this Court have of the great and important services rendered by that officer.”

The interesting trophies of the battle sent to Massachusetts are still preserved on the walls of her Senate-chamber, opposite to the chair of the President of that body.\*

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\* We beg leave respectfully to suggest, that the name of John Stark, with the date of the battle of Bennington, be placed beneath them.

But perhaps the most characteristic incident in the whole transaction, was the neglect of Stark to inform Congress of his victory. Slighted as he thought himself by that body, by the promotion of officers younger than himself, he had quitted the Continental service in disgust. While yet smarting under the recent sense of injury, he had sought the noblest revenge, that of redoubled exertions in the cause of his country ; and having fulfilled this purpose to the utmost of the demands, either of ambition or patriotism, he disdained to make his success the instrument of a triumphant accommodation. He gained his victory two days before Congress had passed their resolution, censuring his assumption of a separate command. As his letters on the subject of his rank had lain on the table of Congress unanswered, he forbore to write to them, even to communicate the tidings of his triumph. Congress, however, wisely chose to take themselves the first step toward a reconciliation, and, on the 4th of October, passed the following resolution ; “That the thanks of Congress be presented to General Stark of the New Hampshire militia, and the officers and troops under his command, for their brave and successful attack upon and victory over the enemy in their lines at Bennington ; and that Brigadier Stark be appointed a Brigadier-General in the armies of the United States.” On the last clause of the

resolution the ayes and nays were called, and one vote was given in the negative.\*

Several anecdotes of this affair have been recorded, and the following deserves a repetition. Among the reinforcements from Berkshire County came a clergyman, with a portion of his flock, resolved to make bare the arm of flesh against the enemies of the country. Before daylight on the morning of the 16th, he addressed the commander as follows. "We the people of Berkshire have been frequently called upon to fight, but have never been led against the enemy. We have now resolved, if you will not let us fight, never to turn out again." General Stark asked him, "if he wished to march then, when it was dark and rainy." "No," was the answer. "Then," continued Stark, "if the Lord should once more give us sunshine, and I do not give you fighting enough, I will never ask you to come again." — The weather cleared up in the course of the day, and the men of Berkshire followed their spiritual guide into action.†

We ought not wholly to dismiss this account of the battle of Bennington, without observing, that General Stark, in persisting in his refusal to march his troops from Vermont to the army under Gen-

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\* Judge Chase of Maryland.

† This is believed to have been the Rev. Mr. Allen of Pittsfield.

eral Schuyler, agreeably to the orders sent to that effect by General Lincoln, was not actuated merely by personal feelings, or a selfish purpose to maintain his separate command. He disapproved, on the soundest military principles, of Schuyler's plan of the campaign, which was to concentrate all the troops, which he could collect in front, and leave Burgoyne's rear undisturbed. Stark, on the contrary, saw, that nothing would more effectually weaken him, than to hang on his rear, and compel him to make strong detachments for observation and security. General Washington concurred in this view of the subject. Stark, however, had, on the 13th of August, and before the resolution of Congress censuring his conduct had passed, communicated his willingness to General Schuyler to coöperate with him in the impending crisis, without any regard to his personal griefs, and in any way, in which the public welfare might require it.

This most important affair, however, was but an incidental circumstance in the campaign. A general call had gone out to New England, in consequence of the disastrous downfall of Ticonderoga. General Stark remained nearly a month at Bennington after the battle, and received a reinforcement of one thousand of the militia; but, as his former troops had enlisted for a short period, their term of service had nearly expired. General Stark finally proceeded to head-quarters, and en-

tered the army of General Gates, at Behmus's Heights. But on the 18th of September, the period for which most of his men were drafted had expired. Gates was desirous to retain them, as he was in daily expectation of a battle. They were drawn up and harangued by him and by their own general, Stark, but without effect. They had been raised *en masse*, and had left their homes greatly to their own inconvenience, and their time had expired. They had expressly stipulated that they should know no commander but Stark, as he had stipulated that he should not be placed under the Continental officers. He was now willing to waive this scruple, but they were not. Finally, General Gates was already so strong, that it was not easy to make out a case of very urgent necessity. With all these excuses, it is not very surprising, that the militia insisted upon being marched home, and that all efforts to detain them were unavailing.

Scarcely had they started, when the action of the 19th was commenced. At the sound of the artillery many turned, and would have gone back to the army. But as the firing ceased, they resumed their homeward march. General Stark, holding no commission in the Continental army, and left without soldiers, returned, to make report of his campaign to the Council of New Hampshire. Wherever he went, he received demon-

strations of the popular gratitude ; and Congress soon honored him with their thanks, and the rank in the army, of which he had thought himself, in the spring, injuriously deprived.

He now addressed himself, with new zeal and efficiency, to the public service. His victory at Bennington had added great influence to his name, and breathed hope and courage into the people. The militia were now ready to rise in all quarters, and pour into General Gates's army, in the undoubting confidence of the speedy destruction of Burgoyne. General Stark was soon enabled to take the field, with a more numerous force than he had commanded before. Acting upon his former policy, he placed his army in the rear of the enemy, and wholly cut off their communications with Lake George and Canada. No circumstance contributed more to accelerate the fall of Burgoyne, as it baffled him in his attempted retreat, after the battle of the 4th of October. In fact, it nearly completed the circle in which Burgoyne was enclosed ; and General Stark was of opinion, that he might have been compelled to surrender at discretion. The state of his army, as disclosed after its capitulation, puts this beyond doubt ; but as all the substantial objects of such a surrender were attained by the capitulation, without the hazard of driving the enemy to despair, it was adopted as the safer course.



The war in this quarter being brought to a triumphant close, and General Stark reinstated in the Continental service, he repaired to New Hampshire for recruits and supplies. In a short time, his services were required by Congress on a proposed expedition, of which the history is wrapped in some obscurity. Congress, without consulting General Washington, conceived the plan of another expedition to Canada, to be commenced, like the former, in mid winter. Without any previous information, that such an expedition was intended, General Washington received a letter from the President of the Board of War, of the 24th of January, 1778, enclosing one of the same date to General Lafayette, requiring the immediate attendance of the latter on Congress, to receive his instructions, as commander-in-chief of the expedition. Generals Conway and Stark were to have been the second and third in command. Lafayette, after receiving his instructions, repaired to Albany, and there General Stark was directed to meet him. On their arrival, it became manifest that no preparations had been made for pursuing the project, and it was accordingly abandoned.

The command in the Northern department was intrusted to General Stark in the spring of 1778. The number of troops at his disposal was small, and he was obliged to protect with them an extensive and important frontier. His station at Albany

imposed on him the unpleasant duty of watching the disaffected, the spies, and the adventurers of all descriptions, that were preying on the public, in this important district. He was glad to escape from the annoyances resulting from his position, and willingly received an order to join General Gates in Rhode Island. Here he was posted at East Greenwich, where the militia were chiefly stationed, a post for which he was eminently qualified, by his popularity with that branch of the army. At the close of the campaign, he returned through Boston to New Hampshire, to enforce, by his presence and urgency, the call for recruits and supplies.

In the spring of 1779, he returned to the army in Rhode Island, and by direction of General Gates instituted a *reconnaissance* of the coast, from Mount Hope on the east, to Point Judith on the west. The military force in this district was small, and more than ordinary vigilance was required to keep up a proper observation of the enemy. Indications of a movement being perceived in the autumn, he removed his head-quarters from Providence to Point Judith, but rarely slept more than a single night in a place.

Late in October, the enemy were in motion, and the men of General Stark's command were for some days on constant duty. On the 10th of November they decamped from Rhode Island,

and early the next morning General Stark took possession of Newport, to protect the inhabitants of that place from plunder, and the other consequences of a change in the military occupation of the town. Shortly afterwards Generals Gates and Stark, with all their troops, excepting a small garrison, were ordered to reinforce General Washington in New Jersey. In the month of December the main army was thrown into two divisions for the winter, the Northern and the Southern; — the former of which was placed under General Heath, whose head-quarters were at West Point, and the latter under General Washington himself, whose head-quarters were fixed at Morristown, in New Jersey.

General Stark was employed by the Commander-in-chief, while the troops remained in winter-quarters, on his accustomed errand to New England for recruits and supplies. In May, 1780, he rejoined the army at Morristown. He was present at the battle of Springfield, in New Jersey, which occurred shortly after his return. At this period Count Rochambeau, with his fleet, appeared on the coast. Stark was sent into New England to collect, if possible, a body of militia and volunteers, to reinforce the army at West Point. This object he effected with his usual energy, and reached West Point, while General Washington was absent at Hartford, whither he had repaired


to hold a conference with Count Rochambeau, as to the combined operations of their forces. This was shortly before the defection of Arnold. Having delivered up his reinforcements, General Stark rejoined his division in New Jersey ; but, in the month of September, he was ordered with his brigade to relieve General Saint Clair, who had occupied West Point with the troops of the Pennsylvania line, after Arnold's flight.

While at West Point, it became his painful duty to act on the court-martial, by which Major André was condemned as a spy. He felt the hardship of the case, but joined his brother officers, in the unanimous opinion, that the life of this unfortunate officer was forfeited by the laws of war, and that the interests of the country required, that the forfeit should be paid.

About this time General Washington, having formed a project to surprise Staten-Island, with a view to masking his intentions, ordered General Stark, with a detachment of twenty-five hundred men and a heavy train of wagons, to advance as near as possible to York Island, bring off all the corn and forage that could be collected, and hover about the approaches to the city, till they should be ordered back. The British appear to have suspected some concealed design, for they suffered this detachment to range the country up to Morrisania and Kingsbridge, and then quietly to return

with their booty. Having received a despatch from General Washington, brought by Colonel Humphreys across the ferry at Paulus Hook a stormy night, informing them, that the expedition against Staten-Island was abandoned, General Stark drew off his forces and returned to headquarters. Shortly after this period, the army went into winter-quarters at West Point, New Windsor, and Fishkill.

During the summer of 1780, General Stark joined his brother officers in one of those touching and powerful appeals to Congress, on the distressed state of the army, with which the annals of the Revolution abound. The arrival of the French auxiliary forces brought home to the minds of the American soldiery, officers and men, a painful contrast of condition. The French troops were liberally paid in specie, the American troops received a compensation, at best inadequate, in paper which was worthless. The officers were almost without exception of a class of men, dependent on their industry and exertions in their various callings and pursuits, for the support of themselves and their families. While they were withdrawn from home, their professions, their farms, and pecuniary affairs necessarily went to decay, and their families were straitened. Their appointment as officers frequently yielded them not even the decent comforts of life for themselves at the camp. Men, "whose



tables once abounded with plenty and variety," were, in consequence of devoting themselves to the service of the country, compelled "to subsist, month after month, upon barely one ration of dry bread and meat, and that frequently of the meanest quality, their families looking to them in vain for their usual support, and their children for that education, to which they once had a title."

These painful expostulations produced for the present no beneficial effect. The difficulty was perhaps less than is generally supposed in the real poverty of the country, though it would be paradoxical to deny, that the country was poor. But the soil was as fertile then as now. The number of persons withdrawn from the peaceful and productive pursuits of life, and engaged in the military service of the country, was not large enough, either by the loss of their labor or the burden of their support, to make three millions of people poor. The regular foreign trade of the country was destroyed ; but it had never yet been the great interest which it has since become, and its place was partly supplied by privateering, which was probably carried on much to the advantage of the United States. The subsistence of the enemy's armies was eventually a great branch of business, profitable to the country, although the circulation of the capitals employed in it, was of course impeded by political causes. All these considera-

tions show sufficiently, that the extreme public poverty, which forms so prominent and painful a topic in the state-papers of the Revolution, was a poverty not of the people but of the government. The government had no power. The property belonged to the people, and the government could not act on the people. Its only action was on the States, and the States in a mere financial view were metaphysical existences. They had no money, and were subject to no process. The bitterness of the experience, which our fathers had of the evils of such a system, explains their readiness, heightened as they were on the subject of taxation, to clothe the new government, formed by the federal constitution, with a direct control, under constitutional limits, over the property of the citizen.

Failing in their application to Congress, some of the general officers from New England addressed a memorial to their several States, at the close of the year 1780. It is a powerful and interesting document. The name of General Greene stands at the head of the signers, and that of General Stark is among the number. This able document, like that last mentioned, may be found in the Appendix to the interesting Memoir of General Stark, to which we have so often had occasion to refer.

The health of General Stark was seriously impaired at the close of this campaign. He was now beyond the meridian of a life, almost the whole of

which had been a scene of hardship. One of the pioneers of civilization on a savage frontier, a hunter, a clearer of the soil, a ranger through the Seven Years' War, and already for five years engaged in that of the Revolution, it is not to be wondered at, that he found his constitution, strong as it was, not insensible to the trials, to which he subjected it. He thought seriously, at the close of the campaign of 1780, of retiring from the service, and endeavoring to restore his health, in the cultivation of his farm. He communicated his feelings to General Sullivan, with his views of the provision which Congress was bound to make for officers who retired disabled from the service. On the advice of General Sullivan, he went no further, than to ask a furlough for the winter. This was readily accorded to him. Relaxation from the pressure of active duty accomplished the only object he had in view in retiring; and he was prepared, on the return of spring, to resume his post, with recruited health, and new ardor in the public service.

In the month of June, 1781, General Stark was designated by the Commander-in-chief to command the Northern department. His head-quarters were fixed at Saratoga. The force at his control for the protection of the frontier was but inconsiderable, consisting of small detachments from the militia of New York, New Hampshire, and Massachu-



setts. The post was by no means an enviable one. The country was, in this part of it, overrun by spies and traitors. Robberies were of frequent occurrence, and unarmed citizens were sometimes surprised in their houses, and carried prisoners into Canada. General Schuyler's house was robbed, and two of his servants were carried into Canada. The General saved himself by retreating to his chamber, barricading his door, and firing upon the marauders. The militia of Albany were roused by the noise, but the plunderers escaped.


Shortly after General Stark established his headquarters at Saratoga, a party of these brigands was discovered within the lines, unarmed, and a British commission was found upon their commander, Thomas Lovelace, a refugee from the States. He was brought before a court-martial, was tried, and condemned as a spy; and the sentence was carried into effect the following day. This individual having family connexions in the neighborhood, a remonstrance was addressed by them to the Commander-in-chief, and threats were circulated of procuring retaliation to be made. General Washington directed a copy of the proceedings to be sent to him; but no further notice was taken of the affair.

Another of the party, on a promise of pardon, gave information that they belonged to a band of fifteen, who had come from Canada, as plunderers

and spies, and scattered themselves through the country, to ascertain the state of affairs, and collect intelligence for the British general commanding in Canada, who meditated an incursion into New York. He stated, that they had left their boats on the shores of Lake George. A lieutenant was despatched, with a sufficient force, and with the prisoner as a guide, and ordered to wait five days, and surprise the party on their return to their boats. This officer found the boats, but, after having waited one day, the prisoner escaped. Fearful for his safety, the officer disobeyed the orders which he had received, to wait five days, and immediately returned. It was afterwards ascertained, that the party returned in two days, and might all have been surprised.

General Stark was at his post at Saratoga, when the army of Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. Writing to General Schuyler, a few weeks before that event, he expresses a confident assurance, that it would take place, and his regret at not sharing in the glory of the triumph, which he foretold for his country's arms. After this memorable event, which brought the war to a virtual close, and removed all danger of an inroad upon the Canada frontier, General Stark dismissed the militia to their homes, with his thanks for their good conduct ; and, having taken measures for the security of the public property, was directed himself to repair to New

England by the way of Albany, and to exert himself during the winter in raising men and supplies for the ensuing campaign. He did not, however, himself take the field in 1782. The season passed away without active military operations; negotiations for peace were known to be on foot, and were brought to a provisional close, in the autumn of that year. These considerations, with the state of his health, greatly impaired by attacks of rheumatism, prevented his joining the army till ordered to do so by General Washington, in April, 1783. He reported himself at head-quarters on the day appointed, and received the thanks of General Washington for his punctuality. He exerted his best influence, with that of his brother officers, to allay the discontent which existed in the minds of the army, and which was studiously fomented by the famous Newburg Letters. He had, at a former period, been, on his own account, dissatisfied with the policy pursued by Congress; and some of his letters manifest the persuasion, on his part, that the interests of the army were not cordially promoted by that body. But his distrust was overcome by the progress of events. Congress had exerted itself to the utmost, to meet the reasonable wishes of officers and men, and Stark was particularly solicitous, that the close of the glorious drama should be sullied by no discreditable or unpatriotic act on the part of his associates.



When the army was finally disbanded, he retired to private life, carrying with him an honored name. He devoted himself, for the residue of his days, to the care of his farm, and the various duties, which devolved upon him, as the head of a numerous family. Leading the life of a real Cincinnatus, he declined associating himself with the Society, formed by the officers of the newly disbanded army, under that name. He shared the apprehensions, which prevailed so widely, of the dangerous tendency of that institution; and he had something severe and primitive in his taste, which disinclined him from its organization.

From the close of the revolutionary war, no incident of public importance marks the life of General Stark. He gradually descended the vale of years, an object of respect due to age, patriotism, integrity, and public service of the most brilliant cast, in trying times. His life was prolonged, beyond any expectation which could reasonably be formed of one, whose early years were one unbroken series of hardship and exposure. He attained the unusual age of ninety-four. For many years before his death, he had become, in the best sense of the word, a privileged character. One of the few surviving officers of the Revolution, he was regarded as the personification of its spirit, in the neighborhood in which he lived. He was visited by strangers; and the most eminent

men in the country took a pride in paying him the homage of their respects. The Memoir of his Life contains letters of Messrs. Jefferson and Madison, expressive of the interest taken by these distinguished statesmen in this venerable hero, and their willingness to encourage an attachment on his part towards themselves.

The war of 1812 came upon General Stark at a period of advanced age, when it was, of course, impossible for him to engage for a third time in the public service; but he watched its progress with interest. He was informed that the field-pieces, which he had taken at Bennington, were surrendered to the enemy at Detroit, when the army of General Hull capitulated at that place. The history of these cannon is somewhat singular. They were of French fabric, and, being found at Quebec, were brought by General Burgoyne from Canada, and formed the field artillery of Colonel Baum. Having been taken by General Stark at Bennington, they were inscribed with the date of the battle, August 16th, 1777. On the capitulation of Hull, they fell into the hands of the British, by whom they were transported to Fort George, at the mouth of the Niagara. On the fall of that fortress, they passed again into the possession of the Americans, and were sent by Major-General Dearborn to Sackett's Harbor, where they were used in firing a salute, on occasion of General

Harrison's victory over General Proctor, in the battle of the Thames. They are now said to be at Washington. When Stark heard, that "his guns," as he called them, were taken at Detroit, he expressed great feeling, and regretted that his age and infirmities prevented his taking the field himself.

In the year 1809, an invitation was sent to General Stark, by the inhabitants of Bennington and its vicinity, to join them in the celebration of the anniversary of the battle. More than sixty of those, who had been engaged in the action, attended the meeting, at which the arrangements for the celebration were made. But he was then eighty-one years of age, and the state of his health prevented his accepting the invitation. The committee, in requesting his attendance, expressed the wish, that "the young men of Bennington might have the pleasure of seeing the man, who so gallantly fought to defend their sacred rights, their fathers and mothers, and protected them while lisping in infancy." In reply to this portion of the letter of invitation, the aged hero observed, "You say you wish your young men to see me; but you, who have seen me, can tell them, that I was never worth much for a show; and certainly cannot be worth their seeing now."

At length, on the 8th of May, 1822, his long and eventful life was brought to a close, at the age

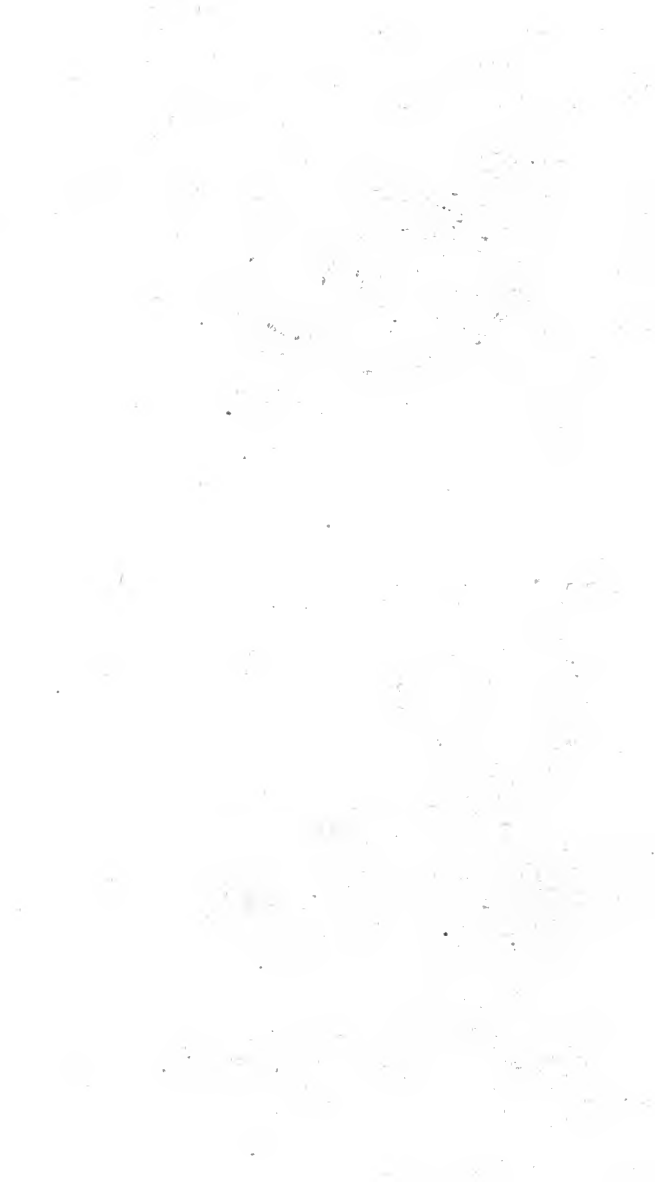
of ninety-four. With the exception of Sumpter, he was the last of the American generals of the Revolution. His funeral was attended with military honors, by a large concourse of people, at the place of his residence, in Manchester on the Merrimac river. His remains were deposited in a tomb, which, within a few years, had been erected at his request, upon a rising ground on the second bank of the river, and visible at a distance of four or five miles, up and down the Merrimac. On the 4th of July, 1829, a monument was erected by his family upon this spot. It consists of a block of granite in the form of an obelisk, with the simple inscription, "MAJOR-GENERAL STARK."

In person, General Stark was of about the medium size, and well proportioned. In his early years he was remarkable for his strength, activity, and ability to bear fatigue. He was seasoned in his youth to the hunter's and woodman's life. In the French war, a single bear-skin and a roll of snow were not uncommonly the ranger's bed. He was remarkable through life for his kindness and hospitality, particularly to his reduced companions in arms. It is justly mentioned as an extraordinary circumstance in his life, that frequently as he was engaged in battle in two long wars, he never received a wound.

The Memoir, to which we have been so largely indebted, closes with the following sentences ; —

“His character in his private was as unexceptionable as in his public life. His manners were frank and open; though tinged with an eccentricity peculiar to himself and useful to society. He sustained through life the reputation of a man of honor and integrity, friendly to the industrious and enterprising, — severe to the idle and unworthy. Society may venerate the memory of an honest citizen, and the nation that of a hero, whose eulogy is in the remembrance of his countrymen.”





Philad. May 8. 1841

The printer has made considerable progress in the publication which I desired I mentioned to you in my last, as having been begun. It will be, typographically considered, a very beautiful book. —

I'm in haste,

A dear

Charles B. Brown.

**L I F E**

**OF**

**CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN;**

**BY**

**WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT.**



## CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN.

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THE class of professed men of letters, if we exclude from the account the conductors of periodical journals, is certainly not very large even at the present day in our country. But before the close of the last century, it was nearly impossible to meet with an individual who looked to authorship as his only, or indeed his principal means of subsistence. This was somewhat the more remarkable, considering the extraordinary development of intellectual power exhibited in every quarter of the country, and applied to every variety of moral and social culture; and formed a singular contrast with more than one nation in Europe, where literature still continued to be followed as a distinct profession, amidst all the difficulties resulting from an arbitrary government, and popular imbecility and ignorance.

Abundant reasons, indeed, are suggested for this, by the various occupations afforded to talent of all kinds, not only in the exercise of political functions, but in the splendid career opened to enter-

prise of every description in our free and thriving community. We were in the morning of life, as it were, when every thing summoned us to action ; when the spirit was quickened by hope and youthful confidence ; and we felt that we had our race to run, unlike those nations, who, having reached the noontide of their glory, or sunk into their decline, were naturally led to dwell on the soothing recollections of the past, and to repose themselves, after a tumultuous existence, in the quiet pleasures of study and contemplation. "It was amidst the ruins of the Capitol," says Gibbon, "that I first conceived the idea of writing the history of the Roman Empire." The occupation suited well with the spirit of the place, but would scarcely have harmonized with the life of bustling energy, and the thousand novelties which were perpetually stimulating the appetite for adventure, in our new and unexplored hemisphere. In short, to express it in one word, the peculiarities of our situation as naturally disposed us to active life, as those of the old countries of Europe to contemplative.

The subject of the present memoir affords an almost solitary example, at this period, of a scholar, in the enlarged application of the term, who cultivated letters as a distinct and exclusive profession, resting his means of support, as well as his fame, on his success ; and who as a writer of fic-

tion is still further entitled to credit, for having quitted the beaten grounds of the old country, and sought his subjects in the untried wilderness of his own. The particulars of his unostentatious life have been collected with sufficient industry by his friend, Mr. William Dunlap, to whom our native literature is under such large obligations for the extent and fidelity of his researches. We will select a few of the most prominent incidents from the mass of miscellaneous fragments and literary lumber, with which his work is somewhat encumbered. It were to be wished, that, in the place of some of them, more copious extracts had been substituted from his journal and correspondence, which, doubtless, in this as in other cases, must afford the most interesting, as well as authentic materials for biography.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN was born at Philadelphia, January 17, 1771. He was descended from a highly respectable family, whose ancestors were of that estimable sect, who came over with William Penn to seek an asylum, where they might worship their Creator unmolested in the meek and humble spirit of their own faith. From his earliest childhood Brown gave evidence of his studious propensities, being frequently noticed by his father on his return from school poring over some heavy tome, nothing daunted by the formidable words it contained, or mounted on a table and

busily engaged in exploring a map which hung on the parlor wall. This infantine predilection for geographical studies ripened into a passion in later years. Another anecdote recorded of him at the age of ten, sets in a still stronger light his appreciation of intellectual pursuits, far above his years. A visitor at his father's having rebuked him, as it would seem without cause, for some remark he had made, gave him the contemptuous epithet of "boy." "What does he mean," said the young philosopher, after the guest's departure, "by calling me boy? Does he not know that it is neither size nor age, but sense, that makes the man? I could ask him a hundred questions, none of which he could answer."

At eleven years of age, he was placed under the tuition of Mr. Robert Proud, well known as the author of the *History of Pennsylvania*. Under his direction, he went over a large course of English reading and acquired the elements of Greek and Latin, applying himself with great assiduity to his studies. His bodily health was naturally delicate, and indisposed him to engage in the robust, athletic exercises of boyhood. His sedentary habits, however, began so evidently to impair his health, that his master recommended him to withdraw from his books, and recruit his strength by excursions on foot into the country. These pedestrian rambles suited the taste of the pupil,



and the length of his absence often excited the apprehensions of his friends for his safety. He may be thought to have sat to himself for this portrait of one of his heroes. "I preferred to ramble in the forest and loiter on the hill ; perpetually to change the scene ; to scrutinize the endless variety of objects ; to compare one leaf and pebble with another ; to pursue those trains of thought which their resemblances and differences suggested ; to inquire what it was that gave them this place, structure, and form, were more agreeable employments than ploughing and threshing." "My frame was delicate and feeble. Exposure to wet blasts and vertical suns was sure to make me sick." The fondness for these solitary rambles continued through life, and the familiarity which they opened to him with the grand and beautiful scenes of nature undoubtedly contributed to nourish the habit of reverie and abstraction, and to deepen the romantic sensibilities, from which flowed so much of his misery, — as well as happiness, in after life.

He quitted Mr. Proud's school before the age of sixteen. He had previously made some small poetical attempts, and soon after sketched the plans of three several epics, on the discovery of America, and the conquests of Peru and Mexico. For some time, they engaged his attention to the exclusion of every other object. No ves-

tige of them now remains, or at least has been given to the public, by which we can ascertain the progress made towards their completion. The publication of such immature juvenile productions may gratify curiosity by affording a point of comparison with later excellence. They are rarely, however, of value in themselves sufficient to authorize their exposure to the world, and notwithstanding the occasional exception of a Pope or a Paschal, may very safely put up with Uncle Toby's recommendation on a similar display of precocity "to hush it up, and say as little about it as possible."

Among the contributions, which at a later period of life he was in the habit of making to different journals, the fate of one was too singular to be passed over in silence. It was a poetical address to Franklin, prepared for the Edentown newspaper. "The blundering printer," says Brown in his journal, "from zeal or ignorance, or perhaps from both, substituted the name of Washington. Washington therefore stands arrayed in awkward colors; philosophy smiles to behold her darling son; she turns with horror and disgust from those who have won the laurel victory in the field of battle, to this her favorite candidate, who had never participated in such bloody glory, and whose fame was derived from the conquest of philosophy alone. The printer by his blundering

ingenuity made the subject ridiculous. Every word of this clumsy panegyric was a direct slander upon Washington, and so it was regarded at the time." There could not well be imagined a more expeditious or effectual recipe for converting eulogy into satire.

Our hero had now reached a period of life, when it became necessary to decide on a profession. After due deliberation, he determined on the law ; a choice, which received the cordial approbation of his friends, who saw in his habitual diligence and the character of his mind, at once comprehensive and logical, the most essential requisites for success. He entered on the studies of his profession with his usual ardor ; and the acuteness and copiousness of his arguments, on various topics proposed for discussion in a law-society, over which he presided, bear ample testimony to his ability and industry. But however suited to his talents the profession of the law might be, it was not at all to his taste. He became a member of a literary club, in which he made frequent essays in composition and eloquence. He kept a copious journal, and by familiar exercise endeavored to acquire a pleasing and graceful style of writing ; and every hour that he could steal from professional schooling was devoted to the cultivation of more attractive literature. In one of his contributions to a journal, just before

this period, he speaks of "the rapture with which he held communion with his own thoughts, amidst the gloom of surrounding woods, where his fancy peopled every object with ideal beings, and the barrier between himself and the world of spirits seemed burst by the force of meditation. In this solitude, he felt himself surrounded by a delightful society ; but when transported from thence, and compelled to listen to the frivolous chat of his fellow-beings, he suffered all the miseries of solitude." He declares that his intercourse and conversation with mankind had wrought a salutary change ; that he can now mingle in the concerns of life, perform his appropriate duties, and reserve that higher species of discourse for the solitude and silence of his study. In this supposed control over his romantic fancies, he grossly deceived himself.

As the time approached for entering on the practice of his profession, he felt his repugnance to it increase more and more ; and he sought to justify a retreat from it altogether, by such poor sophistry as his imagination could suggest. He objected to the profession as having something in it immoral. He could not reconcile it with his notions of duty to come forward as the champion indiscriminately of right and wrong ; and he considered the stipendiary advocate of the guilty party as becoming, by that very act, participator in the

guilt. He did not allow himself to reflect, that no more equitable arrangement could be devised, none which would give the humblest individual so fair a chance for maintaining his rights, as the employment of competent and upright counsel, familiar with the forms of legal practice, necessarily so embarrassing to a stranger ; that so far from being compelled to undertake a cause manifestly unjust, it is always in the power of an honest lawyer to decline it ; but that such contingencies are of most rare occurrence, as few cases are litigated, where each party had not previously plausible grounds for believing himself in the right, a question only to be settled by fair discussion on both sides ; that opportunities are not wanting, on the other hand, which invite the highest display of eloquence and professional science, in detecting and defeating villany, in vindicating slandered innocence, and in expounding the great principles of law, on which the foundations of personal security and property are established ; and finally, that the most illustrious names in his own and every other civilized country have been drawn from the ranks of a profession, whose habitual discipline so well trains them for legislative action, and the exercise of the highest political functions.

Brown cannot be supposed to have been insensible to these obvious views, and indeed, from one of his letters in later life, he appears to have clearly

recognised the value of the profession he had deserted. But his object was, at this time, to justify himself in his fickleness of purpose, as he best might, in his own eyes and those of his friends. Brown was certainly not the first man of genius, who found himself incapable of resigning the romantic world of fiction, and the uncontrolled revels of the imagination for the dull and prosaic realities of the law. Few, indeed, like Mansfield, have been able so far to constrain their young and buoyant imaginations, as to merit the beautiful eulogium of the English poet; while many more comparatively, from the time of Juvenal downwards, fortunately for the world, have been willing to sacrifice the affections plighted to Themis on the altars of the Muse.

√ Brown's resolution at this crisis caused sincere regret to his friends, which they could not conceal, on seeing him thus suddenly turn from the path of honorable fame, at the very moment when he was prepared to enter on it. His prospects, but lately so brilliant, seemed now overcast with a deep gloom. The embarrassments of his situation had also a most unfavorable effect on his own mind. Instead of the careful discipline, to which it had been lately subjected, it was now left to rove at large wherever caprice should dictate, and waste itself on those romantic reveries and speculations, to which he was naturally too much addicted. This was the

period when the French Revolution was in its heat, and the awful convulsion experienced in one unhappy country seemed to be felt in every quarter of the globe; men grew familiar with the wildest paradoxes, and the spirit of innovation menaced the oldest and best established principles in morals and government. Brown's inquisitive and speculative mind partook of the prevailing skepticism. Some of his compositions, and especially one on the *Rights of Women*, published in 1797, show to what extravagance a benevolent mind may be led, by fastening too exclusively on the contemplation of the evils of existing institutions, and indulging in indefinite dreams of perfectibility.

There is no period of existence when the spirit of a man is more apt to be depressed, than when he is about to quit the safe and quiet harbor, in which he has rode in safety from childhood, and launch on the dark and unknown ocean, where so many a gallant bark has gone down before him. How much must this disquietude be increased, in the case of one, who, like Brown, has thrown away the very chart and compass, by which he was prepared to guide himself through the doubtful perils of the voyage. How heavily the gloom of despondency fell on his spirits at this time is attested by various extracts from his private correspondence. "As for me," he says, in one of his letters, "I long ago discovered that Nature had

not qualified me for an actor on this stage. The nature of my education only added to these disqualifications, and I experienced all those deviations from the centre, which arise when all our lessons are taken from books, and the scholar makes his own character the comment. A happy destiny, indeed, brought me to the knowledge of two or three minds, which Nature had fashioned in the same mould with my own, but these are gone. And, O God! enable me to wait the moment, when it is thy will that I should follow them." In another epistle he remarks, "I have not been deficient in the pursuit of that necessary branch of knowledge, the study of myself. I will not explain the result, for have I not already sufficiently endeavored to make my friends unhappy by communications, which, though they might easily be injurious, could not be of any possible advantage? I really, dear W., regret that period, when your pity was first excited in my favor. I sincerely lament, that I ever gave you reason to imagine, that I was not so happy, as a gay indifference with regard to the present, stubborn forgetfulness with respect to the uneasy past, and excursions into lightsome futurity could make me; for what end, what useful purposes were promoted by the discovery? It could not take away from the number of the unhappy, but only add to it, by making those who loved me participate in



my uneasiness, which each participation, so far from tending to diminish, would, in reality, increase, by adding those regrets, of which I had been the author in them, to my own original stock." It is painful to witness the struggles of a generous spirit, endeavoring to suppress the anguish thus involuntarily escaping in the warmth of affectionate intercourse. This becomes still more striking, in the contrast exhibited between the assumed cheerfulness of much of his correspondence at this period, and the uniform melancholy tone of his private journal, the genuine record of his emotions.

Fortunately his taste, refined by intellectual culture, and the elevation and spotless purity of his moral principles, raised him above the temptations of sensual indulgence, in which minds of weaker mould might have sought a temporary relief. His soul was steeled against the grosser seductions of appetite. The only avenue, through which his principles could in any way be assailed, was the understanding; and it would appear, from some dark hints in his correspondence at this period, that the rash idea of relieving himself from the weight of earthly sorrows, by some voluntary deed of violence, had more than once flitted across his mind. It is pleasing to observe with what beautiful modesty and simplicity of character he refers his abstinence from coarser indulgences to

his constitutional infirmities, and consequent disinclination to them, which, in truth, could be only imputed to the excellence of his heart and his understanding. In one of his letters he remarks, "that the benevolence of nature rendered him, in a manner, an exile from many of the temptations that infest the minds of ardent youth. Whatever his wishes might have been, his benevolent destiny had prevented him from running into the frivolities of youth." He ascribes to this cause his love of letters, and his predominant anxiety to excel in whatever was a glorious subject of competition. "Had he been furnished with the nerves and muscles of his comrades, it was very far from impossible that he might have relinquished intellectual pleasures. Nature had benevolently rendered him incapable of encountering such severe trials."

Brown's principal resources for dissipating the melancholy, which hung over him, were his inextinguishable love of letters, and the society of a few friends, to whom congeniality of taste and temper had united him from early years. In addition to these resources, we may mention his fondness for pedestrian rambles, which sometimes were of several weeks' duration. In the course of these excursions, the circle of his acquaintance and friends was gradually enlarged. In the city of New York, in particular, he contracted an intimacy with several individuals of similar age and kindred

mould with himself. Among these, his earliest associate was Dr. E. H. Smith, a young gentleman of great promise in the medical profession. Brown had become known to him during the residence of the latter as a student in Philadelphia. By him our hero was introduced to Mr. Dunlap, who has survived to commemorate the virtues of his friend in a biography already noticed, and to Mr. Johnson, the accomplished author of the New York Law Reports. The society of these friends had sufficient attractions to induce him to repeat his visit to New York, until at length, in the beginning of 1798, he may be said to have established his permanent residence there, passing much of his time under the same roof with them. His amiable manners and accomplishments soon recommended him to the notice of other eminent individuals. He became a member of a literary society, called the *Friendly Club*, comprehending names which have since shed a distinguished lustre over the various walks of literature and science.

The spirits of Brown seemed to be exalted in this new atmosphere. His sensibilities found a grateful exercise in the sympathies of friendship, and the powers of his mind were called into action by collision with others of similar tone with his own. His memory was enriched with the stores of various reading, hitherto conducted at random, with no higher object than temporary amusement

or the gratification of an indefinite curiosity. He now concentrated his attention on some determinate object, and proposed to give full scope to his various talents and acquisitions in the career of an author, as yet so little travelled in our own country.

His first publication was that before noticed, entitled "*Alcuin*, a Dialogue on the Rights of Women." It exhibits the crude and fanciful speculations of a theorist, who, in his dreams of optimism, charges exclusively on human institutions the imperfections necessarily incident to human nature. The work, with all its ingenuity, made little impression on the public; it found few purchasers, and made, it may be presumed, still fewer converts.

He soon after began a romance, which he never completed, from which his biographer has given copious extracts. It is conducted in the epistolary form, and, although exhibiting little of his subsequent power and passion, is recommended by a graceful and easy manner of narration, more attractive than the more elaborate and artificial style of his later novels.

This abortive attempt was succeeded, in 1798, by the publication of *Wieland*, the first of that remarkable series of fictions, which flowed in such rapid succession from his pen, in this and the three following years. In this romance, the author

deviating from the usual track of domestic or historic incident, proposed to delineate the powerful workings of passion, displayed by a mind constitutionally excitable, under the control of some terrible and mysterious agency. The scene is laid in Pennsylvania. The action takes place in a family by the name of Wieland, the principal member of which had inherited a melancholy and somewhat superstitious constitution of mind, which his habitual reading and contemplation deepened into a calm but steady fanaticism. This temper is nourished still further by the occurrence of certain inexplicable circumstances of ominous import. Strange voices are heard by different members of the family, sometimes warning them of danger, sometimes announcing events seeming beyond the reach of human knowledge. The still and solemn hours of night are disturbed by these unearthly summons. The other actors of the drama are thrown into strange perplexity, and an underplot of events is curiously entangled by the occurrence of unaccountable sights as well as sounds. By the heated fancy of Wieland they are referred to supernatural agency. A fearful destiny seems to preside over the scene, and to carry the actors onward to some awful catastrophe. At length, the hour arrives. A solemn, mysterious voice announces to Wieland, that he is now called on to testify his submission to the Divine will, by the

sacrifice of his earthly affections, — to surrender up the affectionate partner of his bosom, on whom he had reposed all his hopes of happiness in this life. He obeys the mandate of Heaven.\* The stormy conflict of passion, into which his mind is thrown, as the fearful sacrifice he is about to make calls up all the tender remembrances of conjugal fidelity and love, is painted with frightful strength of coloring. Although it presents, on the whole, as pertinent an example as we could offer from any of Brown's writings, of the peculiar power and vividness of his conceptions, the whole scene is too long for insertion here. We will mutilate it, however, by a brief extract, as an illustration of our author's manner, more satisfactory than any criticism can be. Wieland, after receiving the fatal mandate, is represented in an apartment alone with his wife. His courage, or rather his desperation fails him, and he sends her, on some pretext, from the chamber. An interval, during which his insane passions have time to rally, ensues.

"She returned with a light ; I led the way to the chamber ; she looked round her ; she lifted the curtain of the bed ; she saw nothing. At length she fixed inquiring eyes upon me. The light now enabled her to discover in my visage what darkness had hitherto concealed. Her cares were now transferred from my sister to myself, and she said in a tremulous voice, ' Wieland !

you are not well ; what ails you ? Can I do nothing for you ?' That accents and looks so winning should disarm me of my resolution, was to be expected. My thoughts were thrown anew into anarchy. I spread my hand before my eyes, that I might not see her, and answered only by groans. She took my other hand between hers, and, pressing it to her heart, spoke with that voice which had ever swayed my will and wafted away sorrow 'My friend ! my soul's friend ! tell me thy cause of grief. Do I not merit to partake with thee in thy cares ? Am I not thy wife ?'

"This was too much. I broke from her embrace, and retired to a corner of the room. In this pause, courage was once more infused into me. I resolved to execute my duty. She followed me, and renewed her passionate entreaties to know the cause of my distress.

"I raised my head and regarded her with steadfast looks. I muttered something about death, and the injunctions of my duty. At these words she shrunk back, and looked at me with a new expression of anguish. After a pause, she clasped her hands, and exclaimed, —

" ' O Wieland ! Wieland ! God grant that I am mistaken ; but surely something is wrong. I see it ; it is too plain ; thou art undone, — lost to me and to thyself.' At the same time, she gazed on my features with intensest anxiety, in hope that

different symptoms would take place. I replied with vehemence, — ‘Undone! No; my duty is known, and I thank my God that my cowardice is now vanquished, and I have power to fulfil it. Catharine! I pity the weakness of nature; I pity thee, but must not spare. Thy life is claimed from my hands, thou must die!’

“Fear was now added to her grief. ‘What mean you? Why talk you of death? Bethink yourself, Wieland; bethink yourself, and this fit will pass. O why came I hither! Why did you drag me hither?’

“‘I brought thee hither to fulfil a divine command. I am appointed thy destroyer, and destroy thee I must.’ Saying this I seized her wrists. She shrieked aloud, and endeavored to free herself from my grasp; but her efforts were vain.

“‘Surely, surely, Wieland, thou dost not mean it. Am I not thy wife? and wouldst thou kill me? Thou wilt not; and yet — I see — thou art Wieland no longer! A fury resistless and horrible possesses thee — spare me — spare — help — help —’

“Till her breath was stopped she shrieked for help, — for mercy. When she could speak no longer, her gestures, her looks appealed to my compassion. My accursed hand was irresolute and tremulous. I meant thy death to be sudden, thy struggles to be brief. Alas! my heart was



infirm ; my resolves mutable. Thrice I slackened my grasp, and life kept its hold, though in the midst of pangs. Her eyeballs started from their sockets. Grimness and distortion took place of all that used to bewitch me into transport, and subdue me into reverence.

“I was commissioned to kill thee, but not to torment thee with the foresight of thy death ; not to multiply thy fears, and prolong thy agonies. Haggard, and pale, and lifeless, at length thou ceasedst to contend with thy destiny.

“This was a moment of triumph. Thus had I successfully subdued the stubbornness of human passions ; the victim which had been demanded was given ; the deed was done past recall.

“I lifted the corpse in my arms and laid it on the bed. I gazed upon it with delight. Such was the elation of my thoughts, that I even broke into laughter. I clapped my hands and exclaimed, ‘It is done ! My sacred duty is fulfilled. To that I have sacrificed, O my God ! thy last and best gift, my wife !’

“For a while I thus soared above frailty. I imagined I had set myself for ever beyond the reach of selfishness ; but my imaginations were false. This rapture quickly subsided. I looked again at my wife. My joyous ebullitions vanished, and I asked myself who it was whom I saw. Methought it could not be Catharine. It could not

be the woman who had lodged for years in my heart ; who had slept nightly in my bosom ; who had borne in her womb, who had fostered at her breast, the beings who called me father ; whom I had watched with delight, and cherished with a fondness ever new and perpetually growing ; it could not be the same.

“ Where was her bloom ? These deadly and blood-suffused orbs but ill resemble the azure and ecstatic tenderness of her eyes. The lucid stream that meandered over that bosom, the glow of love that was wont to sit upon that cheek, are much unlike these livid stains and this hideous deformity. Alas ! these were the traces of agony ; the gripe of the assassin had been here !

“ I will not dwell upon my lapse into desperate and outrageous sorrow. The breath of heaven that sustained me was withdrawn, and I sunk into *mere man*. I leaped from the floor ; I dashed my head against the wall ; I uttered screams of horror ; I panted after torment and pain. Eternal fire, and the bickerings of hell, compared with what I felt, were music and a bed of roses.

“ I thank my God that this degeneracy was transient, that he deigned once more to raise me aloft. I thought upon what I had done as a sacrifice to duty, and *was calm*. My wife was dead ; but I reflected, that, though this source of human consolation was closed, yet others were still open.

If the transports of a husband were no more, the feelings of a father had still scope for exercise. When remembrance of their mother should excite too keen a pang, I would look upon them and *be comforted*.

“ While I revolved these ideas, new warmth flowed in upon my heart. I was wrong. These feelings were the growth of selfishness. Of this I was not aware, and to dispel the mist that obscured my perceptions, a new effulgence and a new mandate were necessary.

“ From these thoughts I was recalled by a ray that was shot into the room. A voice spake like that which I had before heard, — ‘ Thou hast done well ; but all is not done, — the sacrifice is incomplete, — thy children must be offered, — they must perish with their mother.’ ”

This too is accomplished by the same remorseless arm, although the author has judiciously refrained from attempting to prolong the note of feeling, struck with so powerful a hand, by the recital of the particulars. The wretched fanatic is brought to public trial for the murder, but is acquitted on the ground of insanity. The illusion which has bewildered him, at length breaks on his understanding in its whole truth. He cannot sustain the shock, and the tragic tale closes with the suicide of the victim of superstition and imposture. The key to the whole of this myste-

rious agency which controls the circumstances of the story is — ventriloquism ! ventriloquism exerted for the very purpose by a human fiend, from no motives of revenge or hatred, but pure diabolical malice, or as he would make us believe, and the author seems willing to endorse this absurd version of it, as a mere practical joke ! The reader, who has been gorged with this feast of horrors, is tempted to throw away the book in disgust, at finding himself the dupe of such paltry jugglery, which, whatever sense be given to the term ventriloquism, is altogether incompetent to the various phenomena of sight and sound with which the story is so plentifully seasoned. We can feel the force of Dryden's imprecation, when he cursed the inventors of those fifth acts, which are bound to unravel all the fine mesh of impossibilities, which the author's wits had been so busily entangling in the four preceding.

The explication of the mysteries of Wieland naturally suggests the question, how far an author is bound to explain the *supernaturalities*, if we may so call them, of his fictions ; and whether it is not better on the whole, to trust to the willing superstition and credulity of the reader (of which there is perhaps store enough in almost every bosom, at the present enlightened day even, for poetical purposes), than to attempt a solution on purely natural or mechanical principles. It was

thought no harm for the ancients to bring the use of *machinery* into their epics, and a similar freedom was conceded to the old English dramatists, whose ghosts and witches were placed in the much more perilous predicament of being subjected to the scrutiny of the spectator, whose senses are not near so likely to be duped, as the sensitive and excited imagination of the reader in his solitary chamber. It must be admitted, however, that the public of those days, when the

“undoubting mind

“Believed the magic wonders that were sung,”

were admirably seasoned for the action of superstition in all forms, and furnished, therefore, a most enviable audience for the melo-dramatic artist, whether dramatist or romance-writer. But all this is changed. No witches ride the air now-a-days, and fairies no longer “dance their rounds by the pale moonlight,” as the worthy Bishop Corbet, indeed, lamented a century and a half ago.

But still it may be allowed, perhaps, if the scene is laid in some remote age or country, to borrow the ancient superstitions of the place, and incorporate them into, or at least color the story with them, without shocking the well-bred prejudices of the modern reader. Sir Walter Scott has done this with good effect in more than one of his romances, as every one will readily call to mind. A fine example occurs in the *Boden Glass* ap-

parition in Waverley, which the great novelist, far from attempting to explain on any philosophical principles, or even by an intimation of its being the mere creation of a feverish imagination, has left as he found it, trusting that the reader's poetic feeling will readily accommodate itself to the popular superstitions of the country he is depicting. This reserve on his part, indeed, arising from a truly poetic view of the subject, and an honest reliance on a similar spirit in his reader, has laid him open, with some matter-of-fact people, to the imputation of not being wholly untouched himself by the national superstitions. How much, nevertheless, would the whole scene have lost in its permanent effect, if the author had attempted an explanation of the apparition, on the ground of an optical illusion not infrequent among the mountaineers of the Highlands, or any other of the ingenious solutions so readily at the command of the thorough-bred story-teller.

It must be acknowledged, however, that this way of solving the riddles of romance would hardly be admissible in a story drawn from familiar scenes and situations in modern life, and especially in our own country. The lights of education are flung too bright and broad over the land, to allow any lurking-hole for the shadows of a twilight age. So much the worse for the poet and the novelist. Their province must now be confined

to poor human nature, without meddling with the "Gorgons and Chimeras dire," which floated through the bewildered brains of our forefathers, at least on the other side of the water. At any rate, if a writer, in this broad sunshine, ventures on any sort of *diablerie*, he is forced to explain it by all the thousand contrivances of trapdoors, secret passages, waxen images, and all the other makeshifts from the property-room of Mrs. Radcliffe and Company.

Brown, indeed, has resorted to a somewhat higher mode of elucidating his mysteries by a remarkable phenomenon of our nature. But the misfortune of all these attempts to account for the marvels of the story by natural or mechanical causes, is, that they are very seldom satisfactory, or competent to their object. This is eminently the case with the ventriloquism in *Wieland*. Even where they are competent, it may be doubted whether the reader, who has suffered his credulous fancy to be entranced by the spell of the magician, will be gratified to learn, at the end, by what cheap mechanical contrivance he has been duped. However this may be, it is certain that a very unfavorable effect, in another respect, is produced on his mind, after he is made acquainted with the nature of the secret spring by which the machinery is played, more especially when one leading circumstance, like ventriloquism in *Wieland*, is

made the master-key, as it were, by which all the mysteries are to be unlocked and opened at once. With this explanation at hand, it is extremely difficult to rise to that sensation of mysterious awe and apprehension, on which so much of the sublimity and general effect of the narrative necessarily depends. Instead of such feelings, the only ones which can enable us to do full justice to the author's conceptions, we sometimes, on the contrary, may detect a smile lurking in the corner of the mouth, as we peruse scenes of positive power, from the contrast obviously suggested of the impotence of the apparatus and the portentous character of the results. The critic, therefore, possessed of the real key to the mysteries of the story, if he would do justice to his author's merits, must divest himself, as it were, of his previous knowledge, by fastening his attention on the results, to the exclusion of the insignificant means by which they are achieved. He will not always find this an easy matter.

But to return from this rambling digression ; — in the following year, 1799, Brown published his second novel, entitled *Ormond*. The story presents few of the deeply agitating scenes, and powerful bursts of passion, which distinguish the first. It is designed to exhibit a model of surpassing excellence, in a female rising superior to all the shocks of adversity, and the more perilous bland-



ishments of seduction, and who, as the scene grows darker and darker around her, seems to illumine the whole with the radiance of her celestial virtues. The reader is reminded of the "patient Griselda," so delicately portrayed by the pencils of Boccaccio and Chaucer. It must be admitted, however, that the contemplation of such a character in the abstract is more imposing, than the minute details by which we attain the knowledge of it ; and although there is nothing, we are told, which the gods look down upon with more satisfaction, than a brave mind struggling with the storms of adversity, yet, when these come in the guise of poverty and all the train of teasing annoyances in domestic life, the tale, if long protracted, too often produces a sensation of weariness scarcely to be compensated by the moral grandeur of the spectacle.

The appearance of these two novels constitutes an epoch in the ornamental literature of America. They are the first decidedly successful attempts in the walk of romantic fiction. They are still further remarkable, as illustrating the character and state of society on this side of the Atlantic, instead of resorting to the exhausted springs of European invention. These circumstances, as well as the uncommon powers they displayed both of conception and execution, recommended them to the notice of the literary world, although their philosophical method of dissecting passion and analyzing

motives of action, placed them somewhat beyond the reach of vulgar popularity. Brown was sensible of the favorable impression which he had made, and mentions it in one of his epistles to his brother, with his usual unaffected modesty ; — “ I add somewhat, though not so much as I might if I were so inclined, to the number of my friends. I find to be the writer of *Wieland* and *Ormond* is a greater recommendation than I ever imagined it would be.”

In the course of the same year, the quiet tenor of his life was interrupted by the visitation of that fearful pestilence, the yellow fever, which had for several successive years made its appearance in the city of New York, but which, in 1798, fell upon it with a violence similar to that with which it had desolated Philadelphia in 1793. Brown had taken the precaution of withdrawing from the latter city, where he then resided, on its first appearance there. He prolonged his stay in New York, however, relying on the healthiness of the quarter of the town where he lived, and the habitual abstemiousness of his diet. His friend Smith was necessarily detained there by the duties of his profession, and Brown, in answer to the reiterated importunities of his absent relatives to withdraw from the infected city, refused to do so, on the ground that his personal services might be required by the friends who remained in it ; a disinterest-

edness well meriting the strength of attachment which he excited in the bosom of his companions.

Unhappily, Brown was right in his prognostics, and his services were too soon required in behalf of his friend, Dr. Smith, who fell a victim to his own benevolence ; having caught the fatal malady from an Italian gentleman, a stranger in the city, whom he received, when infected with the disease, into his house, relinquishing to him his own apartment. Brown had the melancholy satisfaction of performing the last sad offices of affection to his dying friend. He himself soon became affected with the same disorder ; and it was not till after a severe illness that he so far recovered, as to be able to transfer his residence to Perth Amboy, the abode of Mr. Dunlap, where a pure and invigorating atmosphere, aided by the kind attentions of his host, gradually restored him to a sufficient degree of health and spirits for the prosecution of his literary labors.

The spectacle he had witnessed made too deep an impression on him to be readily effaced, and he resolved to transfer his own conceptions of it, while yet fresh, to the page of fiction, or as it might rather be called, of history, for the purpose, as he intimates in his preface, of imparting to others some of the fruits of the melancholy lesson he had himself experienced. Such was the origin of his next novel, *Arthur Mervyn, or Memoirs of the*

*Year 1793.* This was the fatal year of the yellow fever in Philadelphia. The action of the story is chiefly confined to that city, but seems to be prepared with little contrivance, on no regular or systematic plan, consisting simply of a succession of incidents, having little cohesion except in reference to the hero, but affording situations of great interest, and frightful fidelity of coloring. The pestilence wasting a thriving and populous city has furnished a topic for more than one great master. It will be remembered, as the terror of every schoolboy, in the pages of Thucydides ; it forms the gloomy portal to the light and airy fictions of Boccaccio ; and it has furnished a subject for the graphic pencil of the English novelist, De Foe, the only one of the three, who never witnessed the horrors which he paints, but whose fictions wear an aspect of reality, which history can rarely reach.

Brown has succeeded in giving the same terrible distinctness to his impressions by means of individual portraiture. He has, however, not confined himself to this, but by a variety of touches lays open to our view the whole interior of the city of the plague. Instead of expatiating on the loathsome symptoms and physical ravages of the disease, he selects the most striking moral circumstances which attend it ; he dwells on the withering sensation that falls so heavily on the heart, in

the streets of the once busy and crowded city, now deserted and silent, save only where the wheels of the melancholy hearse are heard to rumble along the pavement. Our author not unfrequently succeeds in conveying more to the heart by the skilful selection of a single circumstance, than would have flowed from a multitude of petty details. It is the art of the great masters of poetry and painting.

The same year in which Brown produced the first part of "Arthur Mervyn," he entered on the publication of a periodical entitled *The Monthly Magazine and American Review*, a work, that, during its brief existence, which terminated in the following year, afforded abundant evidence of its editor's versatility of talent and the ample range of his literary acquisitions. Our hero was now fairly in the traces of authorship. He looked to it as his permanent vocation, and the indefatigable diligence with which he devoted himself to it may at least serve to show that he did not shrink from his professional engagements from any lack of industry or enterprise.

The publication of "Arthur Mervyn" was succeeded not long after by that of *Edgar Huntly, or the Adventures of a Sleepwalker*; a romance presenting a greater variety of wild and picturesque adventure, with more copious delineations of natural scenery, than is to be found in his other

fictions ; circumstances no doubt possessing more attractions for the mass of readers than the peculiarities of his other novels. Indeed, the author has succeeded perfectly in constantly stimulating the curiosity by a succession of as original incidents, — perils and hair-breadth escapes, — as ever flitted across a poet's fancy. It is no small triumph of the art, to be able to maintain the curiosity of the reader unflagging through a succession of incidents, which, far from being sustained by one predominant passion, and forming parts of one whole, rely each for its interest on its own independent merits.

The story is laid in the western part of Pennsylvania, where the author has diversified his descriptions of a simple and almost primitive state of society with uncommonly animated sketches of rural scenery. It is worth observing, how the sombre complexion of Brown's imagination, which so deeply tinges his moral portraiture, sheds its gloom over his pictures of material nature ; raising the landscape into all the severe and savage sublimity of a Salvator Rosa. The somnambulism of this novel, which, like the ventriloquism of "Wieland," is the moving principle of all the machinery, has this advantage over the latter, that it does not necessarily impair the effect, by perpetually suggesting a solution of mysteries, and thus dispelling the illusion, on whose existence the effect of the

whole story mainly depends. The adventures, indeed, built upon it are not the most probable in the world. But waving this, we shall be well rewarded for such concession, — there is no further difficulty.

The extract already cited by us from the first of our author's novels has furnished the reader with an illustration of his power in displaying the conflict of passion under high moral excitement. We will now venture another quotation from the work before us, in order to exhibit more fully his talent for the description of external objects.

Edgar Huntly, the hero of the story, is represented in one of the wild mountain fastnesses of Norwalk, a district in the western part of Pennsylvania. He is on the brink of a ravine, from which the only avenue lies over the body of a tree thrown across the chasm, through whose dark depths below a rushing torrent is heard to pour its waters.

“While occupied with these reflections, my eyes were fixed upon the opposite steeps. The tops of the trees, waving to and fro, in the wildest commotion, and their trunks, occasionally bending to the blast, which in these lofty regions blew with a violence unknown in the tracts below, exhibited an awful spectacle. At length my attention was attracted by the trunk which lay across the gulf, and which I had converted into a bridge. I perceived that it had already swerved somewhat from

its original position, that every blast broke or loosened some of the fibres by which its roots were connected with the opposite bank, and that, if the storm did not speedily abate, there was imminent danger of its being torn from the rock and precipitated into the chasm. Thus my retreat would be cut off, and the evils, from which I was endeavoring to rescue another, would be experienced by myself.

“ I believed my destiny to hang upon the expedition with which I should recross this gulf. The moments that were spent in these deliberations were critical, and I shuddered to observe that the trunk was held in its place by one or two fibres which were already stretched almost to breaking.

“ To pass along the trunk, rendered slippery by the wet, and unsteadfast by the wind, was eminently dangerous. To maintain my hold in passing, in defiance of the whirlwind, required the most vigorous exertions. For this end it was necessary to discommode myself of my cloak, and of the volume which I carried in the pocket of my cloak.

“ Just as I had disposed of these encumbrances, and had arisen from my seat, my attention was again called to the opposite steep, by the most unwelcome object that at this time could possibly occur. Something was perceived moving among the bushes and rocks, which for a time I hoped was no more than a racoon or opossum ; but which



presently appeared to be a panther. His gray coat, extended claws, fiery eyes, and a cry which he at that moment uttered, and which, by its resemblance to the human voice is peculiarly terrific, denoted him to be the most ferocious and untamable of that detested race. The industry of our hunters has nearly banished animals of prey from these precincts. The fastnesses of Norwalk, however, could not but afford refuge to some of them. Of late I had met them so rarely that my fears were seldom alive, and I trod without caution the ruggedest and most solitary haunts. Still, however, I had seldom been unfurnished in my rambles with the means of defence.

“The unfrequency with which I had lately encountered this foe, and the encumbrance of provision, made me neglect on this occasion to bring with me my usual arms. The beast that was now before me, when stimulated by hunger, was accustomed to assail whatever could provide him with a banquet of blood. He would set upon the man and the deer with equal and irresistible ferocity. His sagacity was equal to his strength, and he seemed able to discover when his antagonist was armed and prepared for defence.

“My past experience enabled me to estimate the full extent of my danger. He sat on the brow of the steep, eyeing the bridge, and apparently deliberating whether he should cross it. It was

probable that he had scented my footsteps thus far, and, should he pass over, his vigilance could scarcely fail of detecting my asylum.

“Should he retain his present station, my danger was scarcely lessened. To pass over in the face of a famished tiger was only to rush upon my fate. The falling of the trunk, which had lately been so anxiously deprecated, was now with no less solicitude desired. Every new gust, I hoped, would tear asunder its remaining bands, and by cutting off all communication between the opposite steeps place me in security. My hopes, however, were destined to be frustrated. The fibres of the prostrate tree were obstinately tenacious of their hold, and presently the animal scrambled down the rock and proceeded to cross it.

“Of all kinds of death that which now menaced me was the most abhorred. To die by disease, or by the hand of a fellow creature, was propitious and lenient in comparison with being rent to pieces by the fangs of this savage. To perish in this obscure retreat, by means so impervious to the anxious curiosity of my friends, to lose my portion of existence by so untoward and ignoble a destiny, was insupportable. I bitterly deplored my rashness in coming hither unprovided for an encounter like this.

“The evil of my present circumstances consisted chiefly in suspense. My death was unavoida-

ble, but my imagination had leisure to torment itself by anticipations. One foot of the savage was slowly and cautiously moved after the other. He struck his claws so deeply into the bark that they were with difficulty withdrawn. At length he leaped upon the ground. We were now separated by an interval of scarcely eight feet. To leave the spot where I crouched was impossible. Behind and beside me, the cliff rose perpendicularly, and before me was this grim and terrible visage. I shrunk still closer to the ground and closed my eyes.

“From this pause of horror I was aroused by the noise occasioned by a second spring of the animal. He leaped into the pit, in which I had so deeply regretted that I had not taken refuge, and disappeared. My rescue was so sudden, and so much beyond my belief or my hope, that I doubted for a moment whether my senses did not deceive me. This opportunity of escape was not to be neglected. I left my place, and scrambled over the trunk with a precipitation which had like to have proved fatal. The tree groaned and shook under me, the wind blew with unexampled violence, and I had scarcely reached the opposite steep when the roots were severed from the rock, and the whole fell thundering to the bottom of the chasm.

“ My trepidations were not speedily quieted. I looked back with wonder on my hair-breadth escape, and on that singular concurrence of events, which had placed me in so short a period in absolute security. Had the trunk fallen a moment earlier, I should have been imprisoned on the hill or thrown headlong. Had its fall been delayed another moment I should have been pursued ; for the beast now issued from his den, and testified his surprise and disappointment by tokens, the sight of which made my blood run cold.

“ He saw me and hastened to the verge of the chasm. He squatted on his hind legs and assumed the attitude of one preparing to leap. My consternation was excited afresh by these appearances. It seemed at first as if the rift was too wide for any power of muscles to carry him in safety over ; but I knew the unparalleled agility of this animal, and that his experience had made him a better judge of the practicability of this exploit than I was.

“ Still there was hope that he would relinquish this design as desperate. This hope was quickly at an end. He sprang, and his fore legs touched the verge of the rock on which I stood. In spite of vehement exertions, however, the surface was too smooth and too hard to allow him to make good his hold. He fell, and a piercing cry uttered below showed that nothing had obstructed his descent to the bottom.”

The subsequent narrative leads the hero through a variety of romantic adventures, especially with the savages, with whom he has several desperate rencontres and critical escapes. The track of adventure indeed strikes into the same wild solitudes of the forest, that have since been so frequently travelled over by our ingenious countryman Cooper. The light in which the character of the North American Indian has been exhibited by the two writers, has little resemblance. Brown's sketches, it is true, are few and faint. As far as they go, however, they are confined to such views as are most conformable to the popular conceptions ; bringing into full relief the rude and uncouth lineaments of the Indian character, its cunning, cruelty, and unmitigated ferocity, with no intimations of a more generous nature. Cooper, on the other hand, discards all the coarser elements of savage life, reserving those only of a picturesque and romantic cast, and elevating the souls of his warriors by such sentiments of courtesy, heightened gallantry, and passionate tenderness, as belong to the riper period of civilization. Thus idealized, the portrait, if not strictly that of the fierce and untamed son of the forest, is at least sufficiently true for poetical purposes. Cooper is indeed a poet. His descriptions of inanimate nature, no less than of savage man, are instinct with the breath of poetry. Witness his infinitely vari-

ous pictures of the ocean; or still more, of the beautiful spirit that rides upon its bosom, the gallant ship, which under his touches becomes an animated thing, inspired by a living soul; reminding us of the beautiful superstition of the simple-hearted natives who fancied the bark of Columbus some celestial visitant, descending on his broad pinions from the skies.

Brown is far less of a colorist. He deals less in external nature, but searches the depths of the soul. He may be rather called a philosophical than a poetical writer; for, though he has that intensity of feeling which constitutes one of the distinguishing attributes of the latter, yet in his most tumultuous bursts of passion, we frequently find him pausing to analyze and coolly speculate on the elements which have raised it. This intrusion, indeed, of reason, *la raison froide*, into scenes of the greatest interest and emotion, has sometimes the unhappy effect of chilling them altogether.

In 1800, Brown published the second part of his *Arthur Mervyn*, whose occasional displays of energy and pathos by no means compensate the violent dislocations and general improbabilities of the narrative. Our author was led into these defects by the unpardonable precipitancy of his composition. Three of his romances were thrown off in the course of one year. These were written with the printer's devil literally at his elbow; one

being begun before another was completed, and all of them before a regular, well digested plan was devised for their execution.

The consequences of this curious style of doing business are such as might have been predicted. The incidents are strung together with about as little connexion as the rhymes in "The house that Jack built"; and the whole reminds us of some bizarre, antiquated edifice, exhibiting a dozen styles of architecture according to the caprice or convenience of its successive owners.

The reader is ever at a loss for a clew to guide him through the labyrinth of strange, incongruous incident. It would seem as if the great object of the author was to keep alive the state of suspense, on the player's principle, in the "Rehearsal," that "on the stage, it is best to keep the audience in suspense, for to guess presently at the plot, or the sense, tires them at the end of the first act. Now here, every line surprises you, and brings in new matter!" Perhaps, however, all this proceeds less from calculation, than from the embarrassment which the novelist feels in attempting a solution of his own riddles, and which leads him to put off the reader, by multiplying incident after incident, until at length, entangled in the complicated snarl of his own intrigue, he is finally obliged, when the fatal hour arrives, to cut the knot which he cannot unravel. There is no other way by which we can

account for the forced and violent *dénouemens* which bring up so many of Brown's fictions. Voltaire has remarked somewhere in his *Commentaries* on Corneille, that "an author may write with the rapidity of genius, but should correct with scrupulous deliberation." Our author seems to have thought it sufficient to comply with the first half of the maxim.

In 1801, Brown published his novel of *Clara Howard*, and, in 1804, closed the series with *Jane Talbot*, first printed in England. They are composed in a more subdued tone, discarding those startling preternatural incidents, of which he had made such free use in his former fictions. In the preface to his first romance, "Wieland," he remarks, in allusion to the mystery, on which the story is made to depend, that "it is a sufficient vindication of the writer, if history furnishes one parallel fact." But the French critic, who tells us *le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable*, has, with more judgment, condemned this vicious recurrence to extravagant and improbable incident. Truth cannot always be pleaded in vindication of the author of a fiction, any more than of a libel. Brown seems to have subsequently come into the same opinion; for in a letter addressed to his brother James, after the publication of "Edgar Huntly," he observes; "Your remarks upon the gloominess and out-of-nature incidents



of 'Huntly,' if they be not just in their full extent, are doubtless such as most readers will make, which alone is a sufficient reason for dropping the doleful tone and assuming a cheerful one, or at least substituting moral causes and daily incidents in place of the prodigious or the singular. I shall not fall hereafter into that strain." The two last novels of our author, however, although purified from the more glaring defects of the preceding, were so inferior in their general power and originality of conception, that they never rose to the same level in public favor.

In the year 1801, Brown returned to his native city, Philadelphia, where he established his residence in the family of his brother. Here he continued, steadily pursuing his literary avocations, and in 1803, undertook the conduct of a periodical, entitled *The Literary Magazine and American Register*. A great change had taken place in his opinions on more than one important topic connected with human life and happiness, and, indeed, in his general tone of thinking, since abandoning his professional career. Brighter prospects no doubt suggested to him more cheerful considerations. Instead of a mere dreamer in the world of fancy, he had now become a practical man; larger experience and deeper meditation had shown him the emptiness of his Utopian theories; and though his sensibilities were as ardent, and as easily en-

listed as ever in the cause of humanity, his schemes of amelioration were built upon, not against the existing institutions of society. The enunciation of the principles, on which the periodical above alluded to was to be conducted, is so honorable every way to his heart and his understanding, that we cannot refrain from making a brief extract from it.

“In an age like this, when the foundations of religion and morality have been so boldly attacked, it seems necessary, in announcing a work of this nature, to be particularly explicit as to the path which the editor means to pursue. He, therefore, avows himself to be, without equivocation or reserve, the ardent friend and the willing champion of the Christian religion. Christian piety he reveres as the highest excellence of human beings; and the amplest reward he can seek for his labor is the consciousness of having, in some degree, however inconsiderable, contributed to recommend the practice of religious duties. As in the conduct of this work a supreme regard will be paid to the interests of religion and morality, he will scrupulously guard against all that dishonors and impairs that principle. Every thing that savors of indelicacy or licentiousness will be rigorously proscribed. His poetical pieces may be dull, but they shall at least be free from voluptuousness or sensuality; and his prose,

whether seconded or not by genius and knowledge, shall scrupulously aim at the promotion of public and private virtue."

During his abode in New York, our author had formed an attachment to an amiable and accomplished young lady, Miss Elizabeth Linn, daughter of the excellent and highly gifted Presbyterian divine, Dr. William Linn, of that city. Their mutual attachment, in which the impulses of the heart were sanctioned by the understanding, was followed by their marriage in November, 1804, after which he never again removed his residence from Philadelphia.

With the additional responsibilities of his new station, he pursued his literary labors with increased diligence. He projected the plan of an *Annual Register*, the first work of the kind in the country, and in 1806 edited the first volume of the publication, which was undertaken at the risk of an eminent bookseller of Philadelphia, Mr. Conrad, who had engaged his editorial labors in the conduct of the former Magazine, begun in 1803. When it is considered, that both these periodicals were placed under the superintendence of one individual, and that he bestowed such indefatigable attention on them, that they were not only prepared, but a large portion actually executed by his own hands, we shall form no mean opinion of the extent and variety of his

stores of information, and his facility in applying them. Both works are replete with evidences of the taste and erudition of their editor, embracing a wide range of miscellaneous articles, essays, literary criticism, and scientific researches. The historical portion of "The Register," in particular, comprehending, in addition to the political annals of the principal states of Europe and of our own country, an elaborate inquiry into the origin and organization of our domestic institutions, displays a discrimination in the selection of incidents, and a good faith and candor in the mode of discussing them, that entitle it to great authority as a record of contemporary transactions. Eight volumes were published of the first mentioned periodical, and the latter was continued under his direction till the end of the fifth volume, 1809.

In addition to these regular, and, as they may be called, professional labors, he indulged his prolific pen in various speculations, both of a literary and political character, many of which appeared in the pages of the "Port Folio." Among other occasional productions we may notice a beautiful biographical sketch of his wife's brother, Dr. J. B. Linn, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, whose lamented death occurred in the year succeeding Brown's marriage. We must not leave out of the account three elaborate and extended pamphlets, published between 1803 and

1809, on political topics of deep interest to the community at that time. The first of these, on the cession of Louisiana to the French, soon went into a second edition. They all excited general attention, at the time of their appearance, by the novelty of their arguments, the variety and copiousness of their information, the liberality of their views, the independence, so rare at that day, of foreign prejudices, the exemption, still rarer, from the bitterness of party spirit; and, lastly, the tone of loyal and heartfelt patriotism,—a patriotism without cant,—with which the author dwells on the expanding glory and prosperity of his country, in a strain of prophecy, that it is our boast has now become history.

Thus occupied, Brown's situation seemed now to afford him all the means for happiness attainable in this life. His own labors secured to him an honorable independence, and a high reputation, which, to a mind devoted to professional or other intellectual pursuits, is usually of far higher estimation than gain. Round his own fireside, he found ample scope for the exercise of his affectionate sensibilities; while the tranquil pleasures of domestic life proved the best possible relaxation for a mind wearied by severe intellectual effort. His grateful heart was deeply sensible to the extent of his blessings, and in more than one letter he indulges in a vein of reflection, which

shows, that his only solicitude was from the fear of their instability. His own health furnished too well-grounded cause for such apprehensions.

We have already noticed, that he set out in life with a feeble constitution. His sedentary habits and intense application had not, as it may well be believed, contributed to repair the defects of nature. He had for some time shown a disposition to pulmonary complaints, and had raised blood more than once, which he in vain endeavored to persuade himself did not proceed from the lungs. As the real character of the disease disclosed itself in a manner not to be mistaken, his anxious friends would have persuaded him to cross the water in the hope of reëstablishing his health by a seasonable change of climate. But Brown could not endure the thoughts of so long a separation from his beloved family, and he trusted to the effect of a temporary abstinence from business, and of one of those excursions into the country, by which he had so often recruited his health and spirits.

In the summer of 1809 he made a tour into New Jersey and New York. A letter addressed to one of his family from the banks of the Hudson, during this journey, exhibits in melancholy colors how large a portion of his life had been clouded by disease, which now, indeed, was too oppressive to admit of any other alleviation than

what he could find in the bosom of his own family.

“MY DEAREST MARY, — Instead of wandering about, and viewing more nearly a place that affords very pleasing landscapes, here am I, hovering over the images of wife, children, and sisters. I want to write to you and home, and though unable to procure paper enough to form a letter, I cannot help saying something, even on this scrap.

“I am mortified to think how incurious and inactive a mind has fallen to my lot. I left home with reluctance. If I had not brought a beloved part of my home along with me, I should probably have not left it at all. At a distance from home, my enjoyments, my affections are beside you. If swayed by mere inclination, I should not be out of your company a quarter of an hour, between my parting and returning hour ; but I have some mercy on you and Susan, and a due conviction of my want of power to beguile your vacant hour with amusement, or improve it by instruction. Even if I were ever so well, and if my spirits did not continually hover on the brink of dejection, my talk could only make you yawn ; as things are, my company can only tend to create a gap, indeed.

“When have I known that lightness and vivacity of mind which the divine flow of health,

even in calamity, produces in some men, and would produce in me, no doubt ; at least, when not soured by misfortune ? Never ; scarcely ever ; not longer than an half-hour at a time, since I have called myself man, and not a moment since I left you.”

Finding these brief excursions productive of no salutary change in his health, he at length complied with the entreaties of his friends, and determined to try the effect of a voyage to Europe in the following spring. That spring he was doomed never to behold. About the middle of November, he was taken with a violent pain in his left side, for which he was bled. From that time forwards he was confined to his chamber. His malady was not attended with the exemption from actual pain, with which nature seems sometimes willing to compensate the sufferer for the length of its duration. His sufferings were incessant and acute ; and they were supported, not only without a murmur, but with an appearance of cheerfulness, to which the hearts of his friends could but ill respond. He met the approach of death in the true spirit of Christian philosophy. No other dread, but that of separation from those dear to him on earth, had power to disturb his tranquillity for a moment. But the temper of his mind in his last hours is best disclosed in a communication from that faithful partner, who con-



tributed, more than any other, to support him through them. "He always felt for others more than for himself; and the evidences of sorrow in those around him, which could not at all times be suppressed, appeared to affect him more than his own sufferings. Whenever he spoke of the probability of a fatal termination to his disease, it was in an indirect and covered manner, as 'you must do so and so when I am absent,' or 'when I am asleep.' He surrendered not up one faculty of his soul but with his last breath. He saw death in every step of his approach, and viewed him as a messenger that brought with him no terrors. He frequently expressed his resignation; but his resignation was not produced by apathy or pain; for while he bowed with submission to the Divine will, he felt with the keenest sensibility his separation from those who made this world but too dear to him. Towards the last he spoke of death without disguise, and appeared to wish to prepare his friends for the event, which he felt to be approaching. A few days previous to his change, as sitting up in the bed, he fixed his eyes on the sky, and desired not to be spoken to until he first spoke. In this position, and with a serene countenance, he continued for some minutes, and then said to his wife, 'When I desired you not to speak to me, I had the most transporting and sublime feelings I have ever experienced;

I wanted to enjoy them and know how long they would last ; ' concluding with requesting her to remember the circumstance."

A visible change took place in him on the morning of the 19th of February, 1810 ; and he caused his family to be assembled around his bed, when he took leave of each one of them in the most tender and impressive manner. He lingered however a few days longer, remaining in the full possession of his faculties, to the 22nd of the month, when he expired without a struggle. He had reached the thirty-ninth year of his age the month preceding his death. The family, which he left, consisted of a widow and four children.

There was nothing striking in Brown's personal appearance. His manners, however, were distinguished by a gentleness and unaffected simplicity, which rendered them extremely agreeable. He possessed colloquial powers, which do not always fall to the lot of the practised and ready writer. His rich and various acquisitions supplied an unfailing fund for the edification of his hearers. They did not lead him, however, to affect an air of superiority, or to assume too prominent a part in the dialogue, especially in large or mixed company, where he was rather disposed to be silent, reserving the display of his powers for the unrestrained intercourse of friendship. He was a

stranger, not only to base and malignant passions, but to the paltry jealousies which sometimes sour the intercourse of men of letters. On the contrary, he was ever prompt to do ample justice to the merits of others. His heart was warm with the feeling of universal benevolence. Too sanguine and romantic views had exposed him to some miscalculations and consequent disappointments in youth; from which, however, he was subsequently retrieved by the strength of his understanding, which, combining with what may be called his natural elevation of soul, enabled him to settle the soundest principles for the regulation of his opinions and conduct in after-life. His reading was careless and desultory, but his appetite was voracious; and the great amount of miscellaneous information, which he thus amassed, was all demanded to supply the outpourings of his mind in a thousand channels of entertainment and instruction. His unwearied application is attested by the large amount of his works, large even for the present day, when mind seems to have caught the accelerated movement, so generally given to the operations of machinery. The whole number of Brown's printed works, comprehending his editorial as well as original productions, to the former of which his own pen contributed a very disproportionate share, is not less than four-and-twenty printed volumes, not to men-

tion various pamphlets, anonymous contributions to divers periodicals, as well as more than one compilation of laborious research, which he left unfinished at his death.

Of this vast amount of matter produced within the brief compass of little more than ten years, that portion, on which his fame as an author must permanently rest, is his novels. We have already entered too minutely into the merits of these productions, to require any thing further than a few general observations. They may probably claim to be regarded as having first opened the way to the successful cultivation of romantic fiction in this country. Great doubts were long entertained of our capabilities for immediate success in this department. We had none of the buoyant, stirring associations of a romantic age, none of the chivalrous pageantry, the feudal and border story, or Robin-Hood adventure, none of the dim, shadowy superstitions and the traditional legends, which had gathered, like moss, round every stone, hill, and valley of the olden countries. Every thing here wore a spick-and-span new aspect, and lay in the broad, garish sunshine of every-day life. We had none of the picturesque varieties of situation or costume; every thing lay on the same dull, prosaic level; in short, we had none of the most obvious elements of poetry, at least so it appeared to the vulgar eye. It required the eye

of genius to detect the rich stores of romantic and poetic interest, that lay beneath the crust of society. Brown was aware of the capabilities of our country; and the poverty of the results he was less inclined to impute to the soil, than to the cultivation of it. At least this would appear from some remarks dropped in his correspondence in 1794, several years before he broke ground in this field himself. "It used to be a favorite maxim with me, that the genius of a poet should be sacred to the glory of his country. How far this rule can be reduced to practice by an American bard, how far he can prudently observe it, and what success has crowned the efforts of those, who in their compositions have shown that they have not been unmindful of it, is perhaps not worth the inquiry.

"Does it not appear to you, that, to give poetry a popular currency and universal reputation, a particular cast of manners and state of civilization is necessary? I have sometimes thought so, but perhaps it is an error, and the want of popular poems argues only the demerit of those who have already written, or some defect in their works, which unfits them for every taste or understanding."

The success of our author's experiment, which was entirely devoted to American subjects, fully established the soundness of his opinions, which

have been abundantly confirmed by the prolific pens of Irving, Cooper, Sedgwick, and other accomplished writers, who in their diversified sketches of national character and scenery, have shown the full capacity of our country for all the purposes of fiction. Brown does not direct himself, like them, to the illustration of social life and character. He is little occupied with the exterior forms of society. He works in the depths of the heart, dwelling less on human action than the sources of it. He has been said to have formed himself on Godwin. Indeed, he openly avowed his admiration of that eminent writer, and has certainly in some respects adopted his mode of operation; studying character with a philosophic rather than a poetic eye. But there is no servile imitation in all this. He has borrowed the same torch, indeed, to read the page of human nature, but the lesson he derives from it is totally different. His great object seems to be to exhibit the soul in scenes of extraordinary interest. For this purpose striking and perilous situations are devised, or circumstances of strong moral excitement, a troubled conscience, partial gleams of insanity, or bodings of imaginary evil which haunt the soul, and force it into all the agonies of terror. In the midst of the fearful strife, we are coolly invited to investigate its causes and all the various phenomena which attend it; every

contingency, probability, nay possibility, however remote, is discussed and nicely balanced. The heat of the reader is seen to evaporate in this cold-blooded dissection, in which our author seems to rival Butler's hero, who,

"Profoundly skilled in analytic,  
 Could distinguish and divide  
 A hair 'twixt south and southwest side."

We are constantly struck with the strange contrast of over-passion and over-reasoning. But perhaps, after all, these defects could not be pruned away from Brown's composition without detriment to his peculiar excellences. *Si non errasset, fecerat ille minus*. If so, we may willingly pardon the one for the sake of the other.

We cannot close without adverting to our author's style. He bestowed great pains on the formation of it, but in our opinion without great success, at least in his novels. It has an elaborate, factitious air, contrasting singularly with the general simplicity of his taste, and the careless rapidity of his composition. We are aware, indeed, that works of imagination may bear a higher flush of color, a poetical varnish, in short, that must be refused to graver and more studied narrative. No writer has been so felicitous in reaching the exact point of good taste in this particular as Scott, who, on a ground-work of prose, may be said to have enabled his readers to

breathe an atmosphere of poetry. More than one author, on the other hand, as Florian in French, for example, and Lady Morgan in English, in their attempts to reach this middle region, are eternally fluttering on the wing of sentiment, equally removed from good prose and good poetry.

Brown, perhaps, willing to avoid this extreme, has fallen into the opposite one, forcing his style into unnatural vigor and condensation. Unusual and pedantic epithets, and elliptical forms of expression in perpetual violation of idiom, are resorted to, at the expense of simplicity and nature. He seems averse to telling simple things in a simple way. Thus, for example, we have such expressions as these, "I was *fraught with the persuasion* that my life was endangered." "The outer door was ajar. I shut it with trembling eagerness, and drew every bolt that *appended* to it." "His brain seemed to swell beyond its *continent*." "I waited till their slow and hoarser *inspirations* showed them to be both asleep. Just then, on changing my position, my head struck against some things which *depended* from the ceiling of the closet." "It was still dark, but my sleep was at an end, and by a common apparatus [tinderbox?] that lay beside my bed, I could instantly produce a light." "On recovering from *deliquium*, you found it where it had



been dropped.” It is unnecessary to multiply examples, which we should not have adverted to at all, had not our opinions in this matter been at variance with those of more than one respectable critic. This sort of language is no doubt in very bad taste. It cannot be denied, however, that, although these defects are sufficiently general to give a coloring to the whole of his composition, yet his works afford many passages of undeniable eloquence and rhetorical beauty. It must be remembered, too, that his novels were his first productions, thrown off with careless profusion, and exhibiting many of the defects of an immature mind, which longer experience and practice might have corrected. Indeed his later writings are recommended by a more correct and natural phraseology, although it must be allowed that the graver topics to which they are devoted, if they did not authorize, would at least render less conspicuous any studied formality and artifice of expression.

These verbal blemishes, combined with defects already alluded to in the developement of his plots, but which all relate to the form rather than the *fond* of his subject, have made our author less extensively popular than his extraordinary powers would otherwise have entitled him to be. His peculiar merits, indeed, appeal to a higher order of criticism than is to be found in

ordinary and superficial readers. Like the productions of Coleridge, or Wordsworth, they seem to rely on deeper sensibilities than most men possess, and tax the reasoning powers more severely than is agreeable to readers who resort to works of fiction only as an epicurean indulgence. The number of their admirers is, therefore, necessarily more limited than that of writers of less talent, who have shown more tact in accommodating themselves to the tone of popular feeling — or prejudice.

But we are unwilling to part, with any thing like a tone of disparagement lingering on our lips, with the amiable author, to whom our rising literature is under such large and various obligations; who first opened a view into the boundless fields of fiction, which subsequent adventurers have successfully explored; who has furnished so much for our instruction in the several departments of history and criticism; and has rendered still more effectual service by kindling in the bosom of the youthful scholar the same generous love of letters which glowed in his own; whose writings, in fine, have uniformly inculcated the pure and elevated morality exemplified in his life. The only thing we can regret is, that a life so useful should have been so short; if, indeed, that can be considered short, which has done so much towards attaining life's great end.



Believe me dear Sir  
with much respect  
your affectionate & obliged  
Humble Servant  
Richd. Montgomerie

Highland House

Dec. 28<sup>th</sup>

(GIVEN BY QUEEN)

L I F E

OF

RICHARD MONTGOMERY;

BY

JOHN ARMSTRONG.



## RICHARD MONTGOMERY.

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THE subject of this notice was born on the 2nd of December, 1736, at Convoy House, the name given to his father's seat near the town of Raphoe, in the north of Ireland. His parentage and connexions were highly respectable,\* and such as secured to him an early and liberal education at the College of Dublin. At the age of eighteen, in conformity to his own taste and his father's wishes, a commission in the British army was obtained for him. Of his attention to the duties, or proficiency in the study, of this new

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\* Thomas Montgomery, of Convoy House, had three sons, Alexander, John, and Richard, and one daughter. Alexander commanded a grenadier company in Wolfe's army, and was present at the capture of Quebec. On the death of his father, he withdrew to his estate, and for many years in succession represented the county of Donnegal, in the Irish Parliament. John lived and died in Portugal; and the daughter married Lord Ranelagh, and was the mother of two sons, Charles and Thomas, who have since succeeded to the title.

vocation, we know nothing with certainty ; but judging from the habits and character of his future life, remarkable alike for industry, sobriety, and a scrupulous discharge of engagements, public and private, it may be safely inferred, that his youth, like his manhood, escaped that idleness and vice, which so strongly marked and so greatly degraded the manners, as well professional as national, of that period.

It was the fortune of this young soldier to begin his career of field service in America, where, in another war, it was destined to end. In 1757, the regiment to which he belonged was despatched to Halifax ; and, in 1758, made part of the army assembled at that place for the reduction of Louisburg, a French fortress, on which much time, money, and science had been expended, and to which, from a confidence in its strength, had been vauntingly given the name of the American Gibraltar.

It may readily be supposed, that a place thus characterized, and believed by both belligerents to be the key, which opened or shut the great commercial avenue between Europe and Canada,\* could not long escape the notice of the elder Pitt ; who, to efface the disgrace and retrieve the disas-

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\* The site of Louisburg is the promontory, at which the waters of the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic meet.



ters of three preceding campaigns,\* had been recently called to the direction of the national arms. We accordingly find, that on the 28th of May a naval and military force, commanded by Major-General Amherst and Admiral Boscawen, began its voyage from Halifax to Cape Breton; and on the 2nd of June arrived in Cabarras bay. It was not, however, until the 8th, that the wind and surf had so far abated, as to render a descent on the island practicable. On this day, the reconnoitings of the coast and the covering positions given to the ships, with other preliminary arrangements, being completed, the troops were embarked on board of boats in three divisions, two of which, commanded by Generals Wetmore and Lawrence,† the better to keep the enemy in a state

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\* We allude to the loss of Calcutta in Asia, and of Minorca in Europe; and on this continent, to the defeat of Braddock, the capture of Fort Oswego and garrison (sixteen hundred men); and of Fort William Henry and garrison (twenty-five hundred men); to which may be added the abortive campaign of 1757, made with twelve thousand troops and sixteen ships of the line, under the direction of Lord Loudoun and Admiral Hopson.

† While commanding in the trenches before Louisburg, a bomb thrown from the fort knocked off the hat and grazed the skull of this officer, but without seriously injuring him; a circumstance, which gave occasion for a sarcastic remark made by our General, Charles Lee, then a captain in the British army.—“I’ll resign

of separation, menaced points not intended for attack; while the third, composed of the *élite* of the army and led by General Wolfe, pressed strenuously forward to a head-land near Fresh-water Cove, and, in despite of a heavy and well directed fire from the French, and a surf uncommonly high and exceedingly perilous, gained the bank, routed the enemy, and seized a position, which covered at once the farther debarkation of the troops and the necessary communications with the fleet.\* It was in this movement, equally difficult and dangerous, that Montgomery furnished the first decisive evidence of those high military qualities, which so distinctly marked every step of his subsequent conduct; and which drew

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to-morrow," exclaimed Lee. "Why so?" asked the person to whom he spoke. "Because," said the wit, "none but a fool will remain in a service, in which the generals' heads are bomb-proof."

\* Sir Jeffery Amherst, in his journal of the siege, describes this first step as follows;—"The enemy acted wisely; did not throw away a shot till the boats were near the shore, and then directed the whole fire of their cannon and musketry upon them. But, notwithstanding the fire of the enemy, and the violence of the surf, Brigadier Wolfe pursued his point and landed at the left of the Cove, took post, attacked the enemy, and forced them to retreat. Many of our boats upset, several broke to pieces, and all the men jumped into the water to get on shore."

from his commanding officer, himself a model of heroism, such commendation as procured for him an immediate promotion to a lieutenancy.

It would be wide of our purpose to go into a detail of the investment and siege which followed, or of Montgomery's connexion with either. On these points it may be sufficient to remark, that the former terminated on the 27th of July in the surrender of the fortress, the destruction of several French ships of the line, and the capture of a garrison of five thousand men ; and that the latter was such, as confirmed the favorable impressions already made of our aspirant's aptitude for military service.

While the British were thus triumphant at Louisburg, they at another and important point were fated to sustain a heavy loss, as well in reputation as in numerical force. It will be seen, that in this remark we allude to Abercromby's defeat before Ticonderoga ; on the first notice of which, Amherst hastened to conduct six regiments of his army to the aid of the discomfited General ; and among these was the seventeenth, to which Montgomery belonged, an arrangement, which, besides its useful effect at the time, fortunately made him acquainted with a *champ de bataille*, on which, in 1775, he was destined to lead an army against the troops of his former sovereign. At this point (Lake Champlain) he remained

until 1760 ; when, by the concentration of three armies on Montreal (Amherst's from Oswego, Murray's from Quebec, and Haviland's from Crown Point), Vaudreuil, the French Governor-General, was compelled to surrender his garrison, his post, and his province.\*

The large military force now in British America having no longer any professional occupation there, detachments were made from it against the French and Spanish West India Islands. Of these expeditions the principal objects were the reduction of St. Pierre and Fort Royal, in the Island of Martinico, and of Havana in that of Cuba. The two campaigns employed in the prosecution of this policy were rendered peculiarly laborious and perilous, by the climate and season,† by the many extraordinary means of defence furnished by nature, and by others not less formidable supplied by art. In each of these,

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\* Mante's *History of the War of 1754 in America*, p. 134.

† In a siege of two months and eight days, the loss sustained by the British army in Cuba amounted to twenty-eight thousand men ; besides which, more than one half of the troops sent back to New York (Burton's brigade), either died on the passage, or after their arrival. Of the garrison left at Havana under General Keppel, but seven hundred men were found fit for duty at the peace. — Mante's *History*.

Montgomery had a full share, as well of the toil and danger, as of the commendation\* bestowed upon efforts, which ultimately triumphed over every kind and degree of resistance. Martinico surrendered to Moncton and Rodney on the 13th of February, 1762; and a portion of Cuba, including Havana and the Moro Castle, to Albemarle and Pococke, on the 12th of August following; two events greatly tending to hasten the treaty of Versailles, which put an end to the war on the 10th of February, 1763.

Soon after the official annunciation of peace, Montgomery, who with the seventeenth regiment had returned to New York, sought and obtained permission to revisit Europe; where he remained until the close of the year 1772. Of his occupations during these nine years the details we possess are very imperfect; a circumstance the more to be regretted, as it may be presumed, that what remained of his life took much of its color and character from occurrences, happening during this period. Such were the origin and progress of the controversy between Great Britain and her American Colonies; the intimacy formed between himself and those members of the English Parliament (Fox, Burke, and Barré), who most favored

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\* His conduct on this expedition procured for him the command of a company.

the pretensions of the latter ; his abandonment of the King's service in 1772 ; and lastly, his determination to seek in America a future and permanent home.

On these points nothing written by himself has been found among the few papers, which have come down to us ; nor have we any better authority than tradition for stating, that finding himself twice circumvented in the purchase of a majority, and being satisfied that there was a government agency in both cases, he promptly determined to quit, at once, the service and the country, and retire to America. He accordingly, in 1772, sold the commission he held, and in January of the year following arrived in New York. Having soon after purchased a farm in its neighborhood, and either revived an old or formed a new acquaintance with the Clermont branch of the Livingston family, he in the July following married the eldest daughter of Robert R. Livingston, then one of the Judges of the Superior Court of the province. Removing soon after to Dutchess County, he became a resident of Rhinebeck, where he began and prosecuted his new career of agriculture, with that combination of diligence and discretion, which directed all his movements.

It will not be thought extraordinary, that in the exigencies of the time and the country, a man like Montgomery, though comparatively a stranger

should not be long permitted to remain in the obscurity of his own domicile. We accordingly find that, in April 1775, he was elected a member of the delegation from the county of Dutchess to the first Provincial Convention held in New York. Of his labors in that body, we have his own estimate, which may be usefully offered as an example of unaffected modesty, and an admonition to the unfledged statesmen of the present day. In a letter to his father-in-law, he says ; “ For all the good I can do here, I might as well and much better have been left at home, to direct the labors of my people. On the simple question between us and England, I am I hope sufficiently instructed, and will not go wrong ; but how many may be the views growing out of that and subordinate to it, of which, in the present state of my knowledge, I may not be able to judge correctly ? Inquiry and reflection may, in the long run, supply this defect ; but the long run requires time, and time stops for no man. It is but justice to the Convention to say, that it has in it both talents and knowledge sufficient for its purposes ; and, on the whole, no unwillingness to do business, which, notwithstanding, is a good deal obstructed by long, useless speeches, an opinion, which after all may be mere prejudice, arising from my own taciturn habits.”

At the period to which we have brought our story, the injustice of England had taken a character of decided hostility, and made necessary, on the part of the united Colonies, an immediate resort to arms. In this state of things, the national Congress employed itself in June, 1775, in organizing an army; and, among other acts having this object, appointed a commander-in-chief, four major-generals, and eight brigadiers. Of the latter description Montgomery was one. This unequivocal mark of distinction, conferred by the highest acknowledged authority of the country, without solicitation or privity on his part, was received by him with a homage mingled with regret, apparently foreboding the catastrophe, which was soon to follow. In a letter to a friend he says; "The Congress having done me the honor of electing me a brigadier-general in their service, is an event which must put an end for a while, *perhaps for ever*, to the quiet scheme of life I had prescribed for myself; for, though entirely unexpected and undesired by me, *the will of an oppressed people, compelled to choose between liberty and slavery, must be obeyed.*" Under these noble and self-sacrificing views and feelings, Montgomery accepted the commission tendered to him; and from that hour to the moment of his death, the whole force of his mind and body was devoted to the honor and interest of his adopted country.



The contiguity of Canada to the northern section of the union, the military character of its French population, as displayed in the war of 1754, the strong posts held by the British garrisons in its neighborhood, their control over Indian feelings and movements, and the means taken to give to some of these circumstances a new and increased activity in the approaching struggle,\* could not escape the notice of the sages, who composed the Congress of that day. To neutralize powers, so extended and menacing, became a matter of early and serious consideration with that body; the result of which was the adoption of a plan for invading Canada by two routes, the one by the Sorel, the other by the Kennebec; and that for these ends, an army of three thousand men should be raised and organized to act on the former against Forts St. John, Chamblee, and Montreal; while a second corps of one thousand men should be detached from Cambridge by the latter, to enter Canada at or near Quebec contemporaneously with the other, and effect a junction, if practicable, with Major-General Schuyler, who should command in chief.

To the first of these armaments Montgomery was assigned, as the elder of the two brigadiers; †

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\* The Quebec Act.

† General Wooster was the other.

and in this capacity he repaired on the 15th of July to Albany, whence, on the 17th of August, he was fortunately transferred to Ticonderoga, the point selected for the principal rendezvous and outfit of the projected invasions.\* On arriving at this post, his first object was to acquire a correct knowledge of the enemy's force, position, and projects; and on this last head, being informed that General Carleton, now at Montreal, was preparing and had nearly ready a considerable naval force intended to act on Lake Champlain, he saw at once the effect of the plan, if permitted to go into execution, and the necessity for immediately taking post at the Isle-aux-Noix; as the measure, by which it could be most promptly and surely defeated. In a letter to General Schuyler announcing this intention, he says, "Moving without your orders, I do not like; but, on the other hand, the prevention of the enemy is of the utmost consequence; for if he gets his vessels into the Lake, it is over with us for the present summer. Let me entreat you to follow in a whale-boat, leaving some one to bring on the troops and artillery. It will give the men great confidence in your spirit and

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\* Congress was anticipated in its policy with regard to Ticonderoga, by Allen and Arnold, who, on the suggestion of a few thinking men in Connecticut, surprised the garrison and took possession of the post and its munitions on the 10th of May, 1775.

activity ; and how necessary to a general this confidence is, I need not tell you. I most earnestly wish, that this [suggestion] may meet your approbation ; and be assured that [in making it] I have your honor and reputation much at heart. All my ambition is to do my duty in a subordinate capacity, without the least ungenerous intention of lessening that merit, which is justly your due."

After giving this exemplary proof of personal friendship for his chief, and of professional duty to the public, he hastened to place himself at the head of a small corps, not exceeding one thousand combatants, sustained by two pieces of light artillery, with which, on the 26th of August, he began his movement down the Lake. Being, however, much retarded by continued and violent head winds, it was not till the 5th of September, that he was able to reach the position he had selected for himself. Major-General Schuyler having arrived on this day, it was thought that a nearer approach to the enemy might be useful ; not only from the means it would afford of better reconnoitring his position, but from the favorable impression it might make on the Canadian population. The movement was accordingly ordered, and a landing effected without obstruction, about a mile and a half from St. John's. After a short march in a direction of the fort, and while engaged in fording a creek somewhat difficult of

passage, the left of the line was vigorously attacked and much disordered by an Indian ambuscade ; but being speedily supported by Montgomery, with the centre and right, the combat was soon terminated, and with considerable disadvantage to the assailants.

During the night, General Schuyler was visited by a person giving the following information ; “ that the twenty-sixth was the only regular British corps in Canada ; that with the exception of fifty men, retained by General Carleton at Montreal, the whole of this was in garrison at St. John’s and Chamblee ; that these two forts were strongly fortified and abundantly supplied ; that one hundred Indians were at the former, and a large body collected [at some other point] under Colonel Johnson ; that the vessel intended for the Lake would be ready to sail in three or four days, and would carry sixteen guns ; that no Canadian would join the American army, the wish and policy of the people being neutrality, provided their persons and property were respected and the articles furnished by, or taken from them, paid for in gold or silver ; that, under present circumstances, an attack upon St. John’s would be imprudent ; and, lastly, that a return to the Isle-aux-Noix would be proper ; as from this point, an intercourse with the inhabitants of Laprairie, might be usefully

opened.”\* A council of war, to whom this information was submitted, participating with the commanding general in the preceding opinion, the troops were on the 7th reconducted to their former position on the island. In reporting these transactions to Congress, General Schuyler says; “I cannot estimate the obligations I lie under to General Montgomery, for the many important services he has done, and daily does, and in which he has had little assistance from me; as I have not enjoyed a moment’s health since I left Fort George; and am now so low, as not to be able to hold the pen. Should we not be able to do any thing decisively in Canada, I shall judge it best to move from this place, which is a very wet and unhealthy part of the country, unless I receive your orders to the contrary.” With this manifest foreboding of eventual disappointment, the commanding general left the camp and returned to Ticonderoga; where, and at Albany, he was actively and usefully employed, during the remainder of the campaign, in forwarding supplies to the army.

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\* Whether this information was given by friend or enemy, it was essentially incorrect; the seventh as well as the twenty-sixth regiment was then serving in Canada. No great Indian force had anywhere been assembled, and many Canadians were disposed to join, and did actually join, the American army.

Montgomery, being now left to the choice and direction of his own measures, and being strongly impressed with the necessity of doing quickly, what it would be possible to do at all, availed himself of the arrival of a reinforcement of men and a small train of artillery to resume his position before St. John's, where he began his intended experiments of investment and siege.

With a view to the first of these objects, he on the 18th led a corps of five hundred men to the north side of the fort ; where, falling in with a detachment from the garrison, which had just repulsed an American party under Major Brown, a rencounter took place, of which he gives the following brief description. "After an ill-directed fire for some minutes, the enemy retired with precipitation ; luckily for them they did so ; for had we sooner known their situation, which a thick wood prevented, not a man of them would have escaped." With the conduct of his own troops on this occasion, he was little satisfied. "For as soon," he adds, "as we saw the enemy, the old story of treachery spread among the men ; and the cry was, we are trepanned and drawn under the guns of the fort. The woodsmen were less expert in forming than I had expected, and too many of them hung back. Had we kept more silence, we should have taken a field-piece or two."

Being now left to pursue his object without further obstruction, he proceeded to the junction of the two roads, the one leading to Montreal, the other to Chamblee; where he established an intrenched camp of three hundred men. Having thus done what was practicable to interrupt the communication between St. John's and its sustaining posts, he hastened back to his camp to try the effects of his artillery on the strength of the walls, and the temper of the garrison. In this labor, from causes, neither soon nor easily removed, his progress was not flattering; the cannon given him were found to be too light; the mortars defective; the artillerists unpractised; the ammunition scanty, and the person assigned to him as an engineer, utterly ignorant of the first principles of the art he professed.\* To this list of untoward circumstances may be added the character of the ground he occupied; which, being wet and even swampy, was productive of many and serious diseases; which, besides hourly diminishing his strength, greatly retarded his operations.

To lessen the number and pressure of these embarrassments, Montgomery decided on changing his position and removing to the northwestern side of the fort; which, as he was informed, would furnish ground of greater elevation and dryer sur-

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\* Captain Mott.

face, with a sufficient supply of wholesome water. With this intention, a road was opened and fascines were collected on the site chosen for the new batteries; when, more to his mortification than surprise, he discovered, that to persist in the measure would give occasion to evils of greater malignity, than either or all of those, which it was proposed to remedy by it; in a word, that a general mutiny of the army would be the consequence. Abhorrent as any kind or degree of condescension to an insubordinate soldiery must have been to a man of Montgomery's habits and principles, still he could not conceal from himself, that the evil, which now beset him, grew in a great measure out of the spirit of the times, and was perhaps inseparable from revolutionary movements; that, at any rate, he possessed no power of punishing or even controlling it, and that any course, which should precipitate the army into an act of open mutiny, would be a signal for its dissolution, and an end of all public views and hopes founded on the expedition. In this view of the subject, personal feelings and professional scruples were made to yield; and instead of a peremptory order to execute the project, he prudently submitted it to the decision of a council of war, who, as was expected, refused to give it their approbation.\*

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\* At a later period, the General's plan was adopted and a new position taken on the northwest side of the fort.



While this inauspicious occurrence took place in the camp, another of the General's plans, from misconduct in the leader, terminated unfavorably. To quiet the restless activity of Ethan Allen, who, without commission or command, had attached himself to the army as a volunteer, Montgomery sent him to Laprairie, with an escort of thirty men, and orders "to mingle freely with the inhabitants and so to treat them, as would best conciliate their friendship and induce them to join the American standard." In the outset of this business, Allen was not unsuccessful, and soon acquired an addition to his corps of fifty Canadians; when, either deceived in regard to the enemy's strength, or indifferent to its magnitude, and without direction or privity on the part of the General, he determined to risk an attack on Montreal. He accordingly crossed the river in the night of the 24th of September, and was met in the morning by a British party, who, after a short and slight conflict, captured him and thirty-eight of his followers.

Another affair, more prudently managed and having a favorable influence on the operations of the campaign, occurred soon after. Mr. James Livingston, a native of New York, who had some time before established himself in Canada, had fortunately gained a good deal of popularity with its inhabitants; which, at the instance of Montgomery, he employed in raising among them an

armed corps, under the promise of eventual protection, made and promulgated by the order of Congress. With three hundred of these recruits, and a small detachment from the army, Majors Brown and Livingston obtained possession of Fort Chamblee, capturing the whole of the garrison, and a large quantity of military stores, among which were one hundred and twenty-six barrels of gunpowder. This acquisition having greatly invigorated the siege, and rendered probable a speedy reduction of St. John's, General Carleton found himself compelled to quit his insular position at Montreal, and risk a field movement in defence of his fortress. The force at his disposal for this purpose was not formidable from numbers or from character, and was rendered less so by the division of its parts. Its amount in combatants of all arms did not much exceed twelve hundred men; the bulk of whom was made up of Canadian militia serving with reluctance, and Scotch emigrants recently engaged, and little if at all acquainted with military duty. Of these, nearly one thousand had been retained at Montreal by Carleton, and the remainder stationed with M<sup>c</sup>Clean at the mouth of the Sorel. Under these circumstances and with Carleton's present views, a concentration of the two corps became indispensable; and accordingly, on the 31st of October, that officer began his movement across the St. Lawrence

to Longueil, whence he purposed marching to M<sup>c</sup>Clean's camp, and thence to the attack of the besieging army.

The probability of a movement of this kind and with these objects did not escape the foresight of Montgomery ; who, soon after the capture of Chamblee, withdrew Warner and two regiments from the investing position they had hitherto occupied to the Longueil road, with orders "to patrol that route carefully and frequently, as far as the St. Lawrence ; to report daily to the commanding general such information as he might be able to obtain ; and lastly, to attack any party of the enemy indicating an intention of moving in the direction of the American camp, or in that of the Scotch emigrants." In execution of these orders, Warner arrived at Longueil early in the morning of the 31st, and making no display of his force until the leading boats of the British column had nearly reached the southern bank of the river, he then opened upon them a fire of musketry and artillery, which in a few minutes completely disabled them and put to rout what remained of the armament. About the same time, and with orders of a similar character, Easton, Brown, and Livingston approached M<sup>c</sup>Clean, who, losing all hope of support from Carleton, hastily withdrew to his boats and descended the St. Lawrence.

This new and favorable state of things was promptly communicated to Montgomery, who hastened to turn it to its proper account, the surrender of the fort, the occupation of Montreal, and the capture of Carleton. The first of these objects was accomplished by a written statement of the preceding events, made to the commandant; the consequent hopelessness of succor to the garrison; and the useless effusion of blood, which would necessarily follow any attempt to prolong the defence. The second object was less easily attained, not from any obstruction given by the enemy, but from the disinclination of his own troops to remain longer in the field; nor could this be overcome, but by a promise on the part of the general, that, "Montreal in his possession, no further service would be exacted from them." Under this arrangement, he was enabled to display a force in front of the town, which, on the 12th of November, secured to him a full and peaceable possession of it, and of the armed vessels left by the enemy.\* With regard to his third and great object, he was wholly unsuccessful. Some days before the last-mentioned event, the British general not reposing firmly in Canadian fidelity, and

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\* Eleven sail of vessels with General Prescott, and one hundred and twenty regular troops of the seventh and twenty-sixth regiments.

fearing much from the enterprise and vigor of his antagonist, quitted Montreal and took refuge on board of the fleet, with which he hoped to be able to make good his retreat; but finding on experiment, that this project was impracticable, and perceiving the imminent danger to which the capital of the province was exposed, as well by his absence from it, as by the presence of a new and unexpected enemy at its gates, he promptly and prudently put himself on board of a small boat with muffled oars, and, trusting to his personal fortunes and a dark night, was able to pass the American batteries and armed vessels, without notice or annoyance of any kind.\*

Though now master of a great part of Canada, Montgomery's labors, far from becoming lighter or fewer, were much augmented in both number and character. A pursuit of Carleton, a junction with Arnold, and an experiment on the strength of Quebec, were objects sufficiently indicated by his own judgment, the policy of Congress, and the hopes of the nation. But to prosecute these promptly and successfully required means, in which he was obviously and greatly deficient. His situation in this respect, given in a letter to a member of the Committee of Congress sent to

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\* The position at the mouth of the Sorel was held by Colonel Easton of the Massachusetts militia.

confer with him on the subject of his campaign, will not be deemed uninteresting.

“For the good fortune,” he says, “which has hitherto attended us, I am, I hope, sufficiently thankful ; but this very fortune, good as it has been, will become a serious and insurmountable evil, should it lead Congress either to overrate our means, or to underrate the difficulties we have yet to contend with. I need not tell you, that, till Quebec is taken, Canada is unconquered ; and that, to accomplish this, we must resort to siege, investment, or storm. The first of these is out of the question, from the difficulty of making trenches in a Canadian winter, and the greater difficulty of living in them, if we could make them ; secondly, from the nature of the soil, which, as I am at present instructed, renders mining impracticable, and, were this otherwise, from the want of an engineer having sufficient skill to direct the process ; and thirdly, from the fewness and lightness of our artillery, which is quite unfit to break walls like those of Quebec. Investment has fewer objections, and might be sufficient, were we able to shut out entirely from the garrison and town the necessary supplies of food and fuel, during the winter ; but to do this well (the enemy’s works being very extensive and offering many avenues to the neighboring settlements) will require a large army, and from present appearances mine will not, when brought together, much

if at all exceed eight hundred combatants. Of Canadians I might be able to get a considerable number, provided I had hard money, with which to clothe, feed, and pay their wages ; but this is wanting. Unless, therefore, I am soon and amply reinforced, investment, like siege, must be given up.

“To the storming plan, there are fewer objections ; and to this we must come at last. If my force be small, Carleton’s is not great. The extensiveness of his works, which, in case of investment, would favor him, will in the other case favor us. Masters of our secret, we may select a *particular time* and *place* for attack, and to repel this the garrison must be prepared at *all times* and *places* ; a circumstance, which will impose upon it incessant watching and labor by day and by night ; which, in its undisciplined state, must breed discontents that may compel Carleton to capitulate, or perhaps to make an attempt to drive us off. In this last idea, there is a glimmering of hope. Wolfe’s success was a lucky hit, or rather a series of such hits. All sober and scientific calculation was against him, until Montcalm, permitting his courage to get the better of his discretion, gave up the advantages of his fortress and came out to try his strength on the plain.\* Carleton, who was Wolfe’s quartermaster-general, under-

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\* See the Note at the end of this Memoir.

stands this well ; and, it is to be feared, will not follow the Frenchman's example. In all these views, you will discover much uncertainty ; but of one thing you may be sure, that, unless we do something before the middle of April, the game will be up ; because by that time the river may open and let in supplies and reinforcements to the garrison in spite of any thing we can do to prevent it ; and again, because my troops are not engaged beyond that term, and will not be prevailed upon to stay a day longer. In reviewing what I have said, you will find that my list of wants is a long one ; *men, money, artillery, and clothing accommodated to the climate.* Of *ammunition* Carleton took care to leave little behind him at this place. What I wish and expect is, that all this be made known to Congress, with a full assurance, that, if I fail to execute their wishes or commands, it shall not be from any negligence of duty or infirmity of purpose on my part. *Vale, cave ne mandata frangas.*" \*

Assured, on the 17th of November, of Arnold's arrival at Point Levi, and on the 19th, of his having crossed the St. Lawrence in safety, Montgomery hastened to effect a junction with him ; and having, on the 4th of December, accomplished

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\* Letter to R. R. Livingston, Member of Congress.



this object, he immediately proceeded to take a position before Quebec.

Great care was now employed in acquiring a knowledge of the extent and structure of the enemy's works; the force and composition of his garrison;\* the disposition of the inhabitants of the town and neighboring country, and the means possessed by the latter to supply the wants of the former. The result of the information received on these points was such, as confirmed the General in the opinion expressed in the preceding letter; that siege and investment were forbidden by the paucity of his numbers, not much exceeding eight hundred combatants; by a want of artillery of sufficient calibre, and by the inclemency of the season; and again, that, of the different modes of attack, that of escalade was, under all circumstances, the most advisable.

But that no means of attaining the proposed object might be neglected, this opinion, though decidedly formed, was not permitted to supersede the use of other and preliminary expedients. A summons of surrender in the customary form, a cannonade of the fort from a battery of five

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\* Seamen and marines, four hundred and fifty; privates of the seventh regiment, fifty; McClean's corps, one hundred and fifty; Canadian militia, two hundred and fifty.

guns and one howitzer; a display of the American force in full view of the British garrison, made in the hope that its feebleness would induce, or its defiance provoke, the enemy to forego the advantage of his fortress and risk a contest in the field, were successively tried, but without producing any useful effect. A partial investment, confined to points which most favored an intercourse between the town and the country, was also resorted to; and would have been longer continued, had it not been found that its effect on the Canadian population was unfriendly, from the interruption it gave to their ordinary commerce without furnishing an equivalent market as a substitute; and again, from a belief generally entertained, that a proceeding of this kind indicated a want of strength in the American army. A discovery of these facts could not fail to make an impression as well on the troops as on the general, and besides inducing an abandonment of the investing plan, hastened in both a desire to try the effect of a *coup de main*. Two attacks of this character were accordingly projected; the one on the lower town, from the suburbs of St. Roque; the other on the upper, at the Cape Diamond Bastion, "to be executed in the night and when the weather should be favorable." But before the last of these conditions was fulfilled, a circumstance took place, that menaced the project with both defeat and disgrace.

Three companies of Arnold's detachment (whose term of service was on the point of expiring) having, from some cause not well explained,\* taken umbrage at the conduct of their commanding officer, seized the present occasion to make known their intention of quitting the army, unless, in the approaching movement they were permitted to attach themselves to some other corps. Under circumstances differing from those which belonged to the case, a transfer, such as they desired, would not have been refused; but as, on investigating the facts, Montgomery found the complainants wholly in the wrong, he promptly determined, as well in punishment of them as in justice to Arnold, to reject their proposal. Still, believing that under all circumstances it would be prudent, before officially announcing this decision, to try the effects of a free and friendly expostulation with the malcontents, he fortunately resorted to that process, and was promptly enabled to bring them back to a sense of good order and obedience, without the actual employment or menace of any coercive means.†

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\* Montgomery, in his last letter to Schuyler, speaks of this occurrence, thinks his friend Major Brown at the bottom of it, and promises in his next a full explanation of it.

† Mr. Marshall ascribes the return to duty, on the part of the malcontents, to the influence of arguments ad-

Though now satisfied that the flame of the late controversy was extinguished, yet suspecting that the embers might still be alive, and knowing that means would not be wanting to re-excite them, Montgomery hastened to avail himself of this new and last favor of fortune. A council of war was accordingly convened, and to this the General submitted two questions; — “Shall we attempt the reduction of Quebec by a night attack? And if so, shall the lower town be the point attacked?” \* Both questions having been affirmatively decided, the troops were ordered to parade in three divisions at two o’clock in the morning of the 31st of December; the New York regiments and part of Easton’s Massachusetts militia, at Holland House; the Cambridge detachments and Lamb’s company of artillerists, with one field-piece, at Captain Morgan’s quarters; and the two small corps of Livingston and Brown, at their respective grounds of parade. To the first and second of these divisions were assigned the two assaults, to be made on opposite sides of the lower town;

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dressed to their *love of plunder*, by Captain Morgan. We have adopted in substance the statement given by Colonel J. Livingston, which is, we think, more credible, and certainly more creditable.

\* The first or main question was carried by a single vote.

and to the third, a series of demonstrations or feigned attacks on different parts of the upper. Under these orders the movement began between three and four o'clock in the morning, from the Heights of Abraham. Montgomery advancing at the head of the first division by the river road, round the foot of Cape Diamond to Auncé au Mere; and Arnold, at the head of the second, through the suburbs of St. Roque, to the Saut de Matelots. Both columns found the roads much obstructed by snow, but to this obstacle on the route taken by Montgomery were added huge masses of ice, thrown up from the river and so narrowing the passage round the foot of the promontory, as greatly to retard the progress and disturb the order of the march. These difficulties being at last surmounted, the first barrier was approached, vigorously attacked, and rapidly carried. A moment, and but a moment, was now employed to re-excite the ardor of the troops, which the fatigue of the march and the severity of the weather had somewhat abated. "Men of New York," exclaimed Montgomery, "you will not fear to follow where your general leads,—march on;"\* then placing himself again in the

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\* When Bonaparte assumed the offensive in the battle of Marengo, he hurried through the ranks exclaiming, "Comrades, you know it is my practice to sleep on the field of battle."

front, he pressed eagerly forward to the second barrier, and when but a few paces from the mouths of the British cannon, received three wounds which instantly terminated his life and his labors. Thus fell, in the first month of his fortieth year, Major-General Richard Montgomery.

The fortune of the day being now decided, the corpse of the fallen general was eagerly sought for and soon found. The stern character of Carleton's habitual temper softened at the sight; recollections of other times crowded fast upon him; the personal and professional merits of the dead could neither be forgotten nor dissembled, and the British general granted the request of Lieutenant-Governor Cramahé to have the body decently interred within the walls of the city.\*

In this brief story of a short and useful life, we find all the elements which enter into the composition of a great man and distinguished soldier; "a happy physical organization, com-

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\*It does not fall within our proper limits, to exhibit in detail the future fortunes of the assailing army. It may therefore be sufficient to say, that, in losing their commander, all hope of eventual success was lost. The column of the right, under the direction of its new leader, made a hasty and disorderly retreat to the Heights of Abraham; while that of the left, first under Arnold and again under Morgan, gave evidence only of a high and persevering, but fruitless gallantry.

bining strength and activity, and enabling its possessor to encounter laborious days and sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, all changes of weather, and every variation of climate." To these corporeal advantages was added a mind, cool, discriminating, energetic, and fearless; thoroughly acquainted with mankind, not uninstructed in the literature and sciences of the day, and habitually directed by a high and unchangeable moral sense. That a man so constituted, should have won "the golden opinions" of friends and foes, is not extraordinary. The most eloquent men of the British Senate became his panegyrists; and the American Congress hastened to testify for him, "their grateful remembrance, profound respect, and high veneration." A monument to his memory was accordingly erected, on which might justly be inscribed the impressive lines of the poet;

"Brief, brave, and glorious was his young career;  
His mourners were two hosts, his friends and foes;  
And fitly may the stranger, lingering here,  
Pray for his gallant spirit's bright repose;  
For he was Freedom's champion, one of those,  
The few in number, who had not o'erstept  
The charter to chastise, which she bestows  
On such as wield her weapons; he had kept  
The whiteness of his soul, and thus men o'er him wept."

## NOTE.

(See page 207.)

As nothing will better illustrate Montgomery's freedom from prejudice, and correctness of military judgment, than this opinion, respecting Wolfe's success at Quebec, we may be permitted to give a brief view of the grounds on which it rested.

It will be remembered, that, in the campaign of 1759, General Wolfe was placed at the head of an army of eight thousand combatants, sustained by a fleet of twenty-two ships of the line, as many frigates, and several smaller vessels, with orders to reduce Quebec, a fortress, strongly fortified by nature and art, defended by ten thousand effective men and commanded by an officer, distinguished alike by capacity and experience. The promontory on which this fortress stood, presented to the south a naked rock, rising from the St. Lawrence several hundred feet in height ; to the north and east, a declivity less elevated and abrupt than the former, but such as everywhere forbade an ascent, but by a narrow and winding foot-path, secured at different points by strong palisades ; and on the west or land side, a line of bastions, brist-



ling with cannon and extending from one height to another; thus forming the base of the angle and completing the outline of the work; while within its area rose the citadel of St. Louis, overlooking and commanding the whole. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if, after reconnoitring the place and its defences, the General should have discovered "obstacles greater than had been foreseen," or that he should have come to the conclusion, "that to reduce the place by a direct attack, was impracticable," and that the only expedient left, for giving him even a chance of accomplishing the plans of the government and the hopes of the nation, was a constant and unrelaxing endeavor to decoy into detachments, or to provoke to a general battle, his old and wary antagonist, who seemed to understand too well the value of his fastnesses, to be easily seduced from them.

With these vague and hopeless prospects, the north bank of the St. Lawrence *above* the town was carefully reconnoitred, but without discovering a place, at which the detachment, that should be first landed, would not be liable to be cut to pieces before another could be brought to support it. Still, as something must be hazarded, the General fixed on St. Michael's, three miles from Quebec, for making the experiment; when he discovered, that the enemy had penetrated his design and was preparing to defeat it.

Giving up therefore this side of the town as unfavorable to his project, he now returned to an examination of that lying between the rivers St. Charles and Montmorency ; and, though every accessible part of the shore was found to be “intrenched and redoubted,” and protected besides by “a great breadth of shoal water and a muddy bottom, scooped into holes and intersected by gullies,” he, notwithstanding, decided on making his descent there, because “it possessed advantages, not to be found at any other place,” namely, room for the developement of his whole force, and, if necessary, “a safe retreat at low-water.” The attempt was accordingly made, but ended in new disappointment and increased vexation, for the enemy refusing to quit his intrenchments, neither advanced in mass, nor in detachment, to attack him, while his own troops showed “a great want of both order and discipline.”

This failure no doubt increased, if it did not create, an indisposition, which caused a temporary suspension of the general's activity ; during which he submitted to the consideration of the brigadiers serving under him, the general question of future operations and the direction to be given to these ; subjoining at the same time statements and opinions, which sufficiently indicated the leaning of his own judgment, in favor of a renewed attack on the French positions at Beauport, either

“by turning their left flank and assailing their rear, or by a direct approach in front, on the side of the St. Lawrence.” The answer to this communication, was precisely what it ought to have been ; respectful to the general, but adverse to both the courses suggested by him. It may be paraphrased as follows ; “On either project, the risk is certain, and the advantage to be gained unimportant. If we adopt the first, a march of nine miles, through woods intersected by creeks, swamps, and defiles, becomes unavoidable, every step of which must be known to the enemy and liable to obstruction from his numerous bodies of Indians and light troops. A new repulse, at this time, would be very unfavorable, and a defeat, probably fatal to the army ; while its most complete success would have the effect only of compelling the enemy to change his front, and take the new and more formidable position behind the St. Charles. The second proposition is liable to similar objections ; since our whole movement must be made in the view, and exposed to the fire of the batteries and intrenchments of the enemy ; a circumstance, which our recent experience shows cannot be encountered, without considerable loss, and with the hazard, in case of disaster, of having our retreat entirely cut off, as it is only in a particular state of the tide, that a retreat will be at all practicable.

“On the other hand, taking for granted that British courage will triumph over many difficulties and that the enemy will be driven from Beaufort and its dependencies, what advantage will the acquisition of these places give to us, or what injury will the loss of them produce to the enemy? The effect to either party will be unimportant, since the place itself has no possible influence on the fate of the capital, neither covering nor exposing its supplies, neither strengthening nor weakening its defences ; in a word, 't is but an outpost, which Mr. Montcalm may abandon without loss, and which he artfully presents to us, in the hope that we will knock our heads against it. The movement, which in our opinion should be substituted for these, is, that the army assemble and embark at Point Levi, and ascend the St. Lawrence above the town, and there seek for a place at which they may debark and gain the bank. If they fail in accomplishing this, they run no risk of any serious loss, since the attempt will not be made but under the guns of the shipping. If, on the other hand, we succeed in gaining the bank and in taking a position which shall place us between the enemy and the interior of the province, we may hope to draw him from his walls and to the risk of a battle ; — but, whether this last purpose be effected or not, we shall be precisely in the situation the best adapted to a

coöperation with General Amherst's army, which, agreeably to the general plan of campaign, must now be on its march to join us."

This reasoning silenced, if it did not satisfy, the objections of Wolfe. He adopted the plan with the frankness and good faith with which it was offered, and, being now reinstated in health, lost no time in giving it execution. The troops, to the amount of four thousand effectives, were embarked as proposed on board of a division of the fleet, which ascended the St. Lawrence, while another division of it, the better to mask the real attack, continued to menace a descent at Beauport. This was the moment that fortune began to show her partiality for the British arms. Believing the movement to be only a feint, Montcalm steadily adhered to his field position on the eastern side of the town, and contented himself with detaching Bougainville at the head of twenty-five hundred men to the western side, with orders to keep pace with the ascending division of the British fleet, watch its operations, and repel all attempts at landing.

This officer had accordingly lined the bank with sentinels, established small posts on the few paths which admitted an ascent of the bank, and taken post himself about six leagues west of Quebec and directly opposite to the ships of war. Till now, the vigilance of this corps had been irre-

proachable, and had even merited and received the praises of an enemy ; but on the night of the 12th of September it slept, and so profoundly, that the British fleet and army were enabled to execute their whole purpose, without notice or discovery. The latter, being embarked on board of the boats, fell down the stream to the point agreed upon for the descent, followed and protected by the former, and at one o'clock in the morning, effected their landing, mounted the precipice, drove in the sentries and seized a battery, before even the common signals of alarm were given. When the day dawned, the British line found itself on the Heights of Abraham, and, in a few minutes, perceived the French army approaching by the bridge of St. Charles.

What a moment of anxiety for Wolfe ! Was it Montcalm's intention to shut himself up in Quebec, and leave to the British army the doubtful and dangerous experiments of investment or siege ? Or was he in motion to stake on the chances of a battle the fate of himself, of his army, of the capital, and of the province ? Is it probable, that he, who has hitherto acted so warily, will be less circumspect in proportion as his fortunes become more critical ? Is it reasonable to hope, that a general, who has till now so distinctly seen the advantages of his position, will at once cease to avail himself of what art and nature

have united to do for him? Should he lose the power of making new combinations, will he lose his memory also, and, forgetting alike the maxims of war and the dictates of duty, hazard a post with the defence of which he is specially charged, or give battle on the invitation of an enemy, who has no hope but in the chance of his doing so?

A few minutes solved these momentous questions. As soon as the heads of the French columns, preceded by their skirmishers, were seen to issue from the gates of the town and advance towards their enemy, there could be no longer a doubt of the intentions of the French commander. At this moment, the British army had not yet taken an order of battle; but the simple formation of a single line a little bent on its left, and reinforced on its right, by one regiment in open order, was soon executed. Neither army could claim much support from artillery; the British not having been able to bring up more than one piece, while the French, who could have strengthened their line with a battery of fifty pieces, either neglected or despised the advantage, and brought with them only two nine-pounders. The battle which followed was decided by musketry, and was unmarked by any extraordinary or well applied evolution of any kind. The fall of Montcalm hastened, if it did not occasion, the flight of the French, who left fifteen hundred men on the

field of battle. In this moment of route on the one side, and of triumph on the other, the head of Bougainville's corps marching from La Foix, showed itself on the rear of the British line. But, the fortunes of the day being apparently decided, he retired, perhaps prudently, to concert measures with the commander of the fort, to keep up his communications with it, to check the enemy's attempts at investment, or, if the measure became necessary, to join in the direct defence of the place. On the part of the British nothing could be considered as done, while Quebec remained to be taken; and for its security, there was still left a sufficient garrison and abundant supplies, with an exterior force already formidable and hourly increasing. Time, on the other hand, which was thus strengthening them, was sensibly weakening their enemy.

The British effective force, originally eight thousand combatants, was now, including the corps at Point Levi and the Isle of Orleans, reduced to four thousand men; the weather had already become wet and cold; the sick list was rapidly increasing; and but thirty days remained for field operations, while those of the water might probably be limited to even a shorter period. Much must be done before a siege could be commenced, and an investment, from the nature of the ground, and the deficient number of the troops, was quite



impracticable. Under this aspect of things, the chances were yet against the invaders ; and it required only a vigorous resistance on the part of the garrison, to have saved both the fortress and the province. But "fear betrays like treason." M. de Ramsay saw in some demonstrations, made by the British fleet and army as trials of his temper, a serious intention to attack him by land and water ; when, to escape this, he opened a negotiation for the surrender of the fort at the very moment when a reinforcement of eight hundred men, with an additional supply of provisions, was ready to enter it. Townshend, who, after the fall of Wolfe, commanded the British army, was both a politician and a soldier, and readily subscribed to any terms, the basis of which was the surrender of the capital.

Such is the chapter of accidents by which Quebec was taken in 1759. Had not Wolfe become seriously ill, there would have been no opinion required from Monckton, Townshend, and Murray, and the army would have continued to waste its strength in new attacks on the French positions at Beauport, in conformity to Wolfe's opinion.

Had not Wolfe, in despite of this opinion, followed the advice of his brigadiers and carried his operations from the eastern to the western side of the town, the same consequences would have followed.

Had the French guards done their duty on the night of the 12th of September, the British would have failed in making good their landing and ascent to the Heights of Abraham.

Had Montcalm refused the battle offered to him on the 13th, or had he reinforced his centre and flanks by competent divisions of artillery, or had he delayed coming to blows for a single hour, or had Bougainville arrived in the rear of the British line, before the battle was lost, in either of these cases, the fortune of the day would have been different from what it was.

And lastly, had M. de Ramsay, instead of surrendering, defended his post, the expedition must have failed; since, circumstanced as the British were, they had no sufficient means for reducing the place by *storm*, *siege*, or *investment*.



As having further Information I refer your Excellency  
to Joseph Fay Esq<sup>r</sup> the Beaver, whose representation  
I may be relied on, and whose zeal for his country  
has been very conspicuous on all occasions, Especially  
in the Important Battle of Bennington.  
I am Sir with the Greatest Respect and Esteem, your  
Excellencys Most Obedt. and Humble Serv<sup>t</sup> Ethan Allen  
Bennington 6th March. 1777  
His Excellency General Washington

L I F E  
O F  
E T H A N A L L E N ;

BY  
J A R E D S P A R K S .



## ETHAN ALLEN.

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THE first settlement of Vermont, and the early struggles of the inhabitants not only in subduing a wilderness, but establishing an independent government, afford some of the most remarkable incidents in American history. When we now survey that flourishing State, presenting in all its parts populous towns and villages, and witness the high degree of culture to which it has attained, and which, under the most favored social organization, is usually the slow achievement of time, we can hardly realize that seventy years ago the whole region from the Connecticut River to Lake Champlain was a waste of forests, an asylum for wild beasts, and a barrier against the inroads of the savages upon the border settlers of the New England colonies. This change has been brought to pass in the first place by a bold and hardy enterprise, and an indomitable spirit of freedom, which have rarely been equalled; and afterwards by the steady perseverance of an enlightened and industrious population, deriving its

stock from the surrounding States, and increasing rapidly from its own resources. To the historian this is a fertile and attractive theme. By the biographer it can only be touched, as bearing on the deeds and character of the persons, who have been the principal actors in the train of events.

Among those, who were most conspicuous in laying the foundation upon which the independent State of Vermont has been reared, and indeed the leader and champion of that resolute band of husbandmen, who first planted themselves in the wilderness of the Green Mountains, was **ETHAN ALLEN**. He was a native of Connecticut, where his father and mother were likewise born, the former in Coventry, and the latter in Woodbury. Joseph Allen, the father, after his marriage with Mary Baker, resided in Litchfield, where it is believed that Ethan and one or two other children were born. The parents afterwards removed to Cornwall, where other children were born, making in all six sons and two daughters, Ethan, Heman, Heber, Levi, Zimri, Ira, Lydia, and Lucy. All the brothers grew up to manhood, and four or five of them emigrated to the territory west of the Green Mountains among the first settlers, and were prominent members of the social and political compacts into which the inhabitants gradually formed themselves. Bold, active, and enterprising, they es-



poused with zeal, and defended with energy, the cause of the settlers against what were deemed the encroaching schemes of their neighbors, and with a keen interest sustained their share in all the border contests. Four of them were engaged in the military operations of the Revolution, and by a hazardous and successful adventure at the breaking out of the war, in the capture of Ticonderoga, the name of Ethan Allen gained a renown, which spread widely at the time, and has been perpetuated in history.

But, before we proceed in our narrative, it is necessary to state a few particulars explanatory of what will follow. Among the causes of the controversies, which existed between the colonies in early times, and continued down to the Revolution, was the uncertainty of boundary lines as described in the old charters. Considering the ignorance of all parties, at the time the charters were granted, as to the extent and interior situation of the country, it was not surprising that limits should be vaguely defined, and that the boundaries of one colony should encroach upon those of another. A difficulty of this kind arose between the colony of New York and those of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. By the grant of King Charles the Second to his brother, the Duke of York, the tract of country called New York was bounded on the east by

Connecticut River, thus conflicting with the express letter of the Massachusetts and Connecticut charters, which extended those colonies westward to the South Sea, or Pacific Ocean. After a long controversy, kept up at times with a good deal of heat on both sides, the line of division between these colonies was fixed by mutual agreement at twenty miles east of Hudson's River, running nearly in a north and south direction. This line was adopted as a compromise between Connecticut and New York, upon the consideration that the Connecticut settlers had established themselves so far to the westward under patents from that colony, as to be within about twenty miles of the Hudson. The Massachusetts boundary was decided much later to be a continuation of the Connecticut line to the north, making the western limit of Massachusetts also twenty miles from the same river. This claim was supported mainly on the ground of the precedent in the case of Connecticut, and was long resisted by New York, as interfering with previous grants from that colony extending thirty miles eastward from the Hudson.\*

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\* See *A State of the Right of the Colony of New York, with Respect to its Eastern Boundary on Connecticut River, &c.* pp. 5, 7.

Meantime New Hampshire had never been brought into the controversy, because the lands to the westward of that province beyond Connecticut River had been neither settled nor surveyed. There was indeed a small settlement at Fort Dummer on the western margin of the River, which was under the protection of Massachusetts, and supposed to be within that colony, till the dividing line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts was accurately run, when Fort Dummer was ascertained to be north of that line, and was afterwards considered as being within the jurisdiction of the sister colony. Such was the state of things when Benning Wentworth became governor of New Hampshire, with authority from the King to issue patents for unimproved lands within the limits of his province. Application was made for grants to the west of Connecticut River, and even beyond the Green Mountains, and in 1749 he gave a patent for a township six miles square, near the northwest angle of Massachusetts, to be so laid out, that its western limit should be twenty miles from the Hudson, and coincide with the boundary line of Connecticut and Massachusetts continued northward. This township was called Bennington.

Although the governor and council of New York remonstrated against this grant, and claimed for that colony the whole territory north of Mas-

sachusetts as far eastward as Connecticut River, yet Governor Wentworth was not deterred by this remonstrance from issuing other patents, urging in his justification, that New Hampshire had a right to the same extension westward as Massachusetts and Connecticut. Fourteen townships had been granted in 1754, when the French war broke out, and, by the peril it threatened on the frontiers, discouraged settlers from seeking a residence there, or vesting their property in lands, the title to which might be put in jeopardy, or their value destroyed, by the issue of the contest. Nor was it till the glorious victory of Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham had wrested Canada for ever from the French power, secured these border territories against all further invasion from an ancient foe, and opened the prospects of a speedy and lasting peace, that the spirit of enterprise, perhaps of adventure, combining with the hope of gain, revived a desire of possessing and settling these wild lands. Applications for new patents thronged daily upon Governor Wentworth, and within four years' time the whole number of townships granted by him, to the westward of Connecticut River, was one hundred and thirty-eight. The territory including these townships was known by the name of the *New Hampshire Grants*, which it retained till the opening of the Revolution, when its present name of *Vermont* began to be adopted.

At what time Ethan Allen and his brethren emigrated to the *Grants* is uncertain. It was not, however, till after the reduction of Canada, and probably not till the peace between England and France had been concluded. Meantime among the inhabitants of the New England colonies, a ready market had been found for the lands, and settlers were flocking over the mountains from various quarters. Many persons had passed through those lands on their way to the army in Canada, and become acquainted with their value. The easy terms upon which the townships had been patented by Governor Wentworth enabled the original purchasers to dispose of shares, and single farms, at very low prices, thus holding out strong allurements to settlers. Apprehensions as to the validity of the title must also have induced the first proprietors to prefer a quick sale, with small profits, to the uncertain prospect of larger gains at a future day. By this union of policy and interest the lands were rapidly sold, in tracts of various dimensions, to practical farmers, who resolved to establish themselves as permanent residents on the soil. Of this number were the Allens, who selected their lands in the township of Bennington, to which they removed in company with several other persons from Connecticut.

While these things were going on, the governor of New York did not remain an idle spectator

He wrote letters to the governor of New Hampshire protesting against his grants, and published proclamations declaring the Connecticut River to be the boundary between the two colonies. But neither proclamations nor remonstrances produced conviction in the mind of Governor Wentworth. He continued to issue his warrants ; a population of hardy yeomanry was daily increasing in the New Hampshire Grants ; a formidable power was taking root there, nurtured by the local feelings, united objects, and physical strength of the settlers ; and the government of New York thought it time to seek redress in a higher quarter, and appeal to the Crown as the ultimate arbiter in all controversies of this nature. Accordingly the matter was brought before the King in Council, and his Majesty decided by a royal decree, in the year 1764, that the Connecticut River was the dividing line between New York and New Hampshire. In this decision all parties seemed to acquiesce. Governor Wentworth granted no more patents on the west side of the river, and the settlers showed no symptoms of uneasiness, as the only difference made in their condition by the royal decree was, that they were now declared to be under the jurisdiction of New York, whereas they had hitherto regarded themselves as under that of New Hampshire ; but this change they did not contemplate as a grievance, presuming their property and civil

rights would be as well protected by the laws of the one colony as by those of the other.

But herein they soon discovered themselves to be in an error, and to differ widely in sentiment from their more astute neighbors. Men learned in the law and of high station in New York had made it appear, that jurisdiction meant the same thing as right of property ; and since his Majesty had decided Connecticut River to be the eastern limit of that province, the governor and council decreed, that all the lands west of the said river appertained to New York, however long they might have been in the possession of actual occupants. This was a strange doctrine to men, who had paid their money for the lands, and by their own toil added ten-fold or a hundred-fold to their value ; who had felled the forests by the strength of their sinews, and submitted for years to all the privations and discomforts of the woodsman's life. In a tone of just indignation they said to these new masters, we will obey your laws, but you shall not plunder us of the substance we have gained by the sweat of our brows. The New York government, however, in conformity with their interpretation of the royal decree, proceeded to grant patents covering the lands on which farms had been brought to an advanced state of culture, houses built, and orchards planted, by the original purchasers and settlers. It is true that to all such persons was

granted the privilege of taking out new patents, and securing a New York title, by paying the fees and other charges, which were greatly enhanced upon those paid at first to Governor Wentworth ; that is, in other words, they were allowed the right of purchasing their own property. This was a proposition perfectly comprehensible to the most illiterate husbandman. With a very few exceptions they refused to comply with it, alleging that they had bought their lands by a fair purchase, and had a just claim to a title, under whatever jurisdiction the King might think proper to place them ; that it was not their business to interfere with the controversies of the colonies about their respective boundaries, but it was their business, their duty, and their determination to retain and defend their lawful property. The case was aggravated by an order of the governor and council of New York, calling on all the claimants under the New Hampshire grants to appear before them, the said governor and council, with the deeds, conveyances, and other evidences of their claims within three months, and declaring that the claims of all persons not presented within that time should be rejected. This had no effect upon the settlers, and of course their titles were looked upon as forfeited, and the lands they occupied as being the property of the colony of New York.



It would seem, that certain speculators entered deeply into the affair, influenced more by the literal construction or ambiguous meaning of charters and royal decrees, than by the power of the settlers to support their claims, or the absolute justice of their cause. Hence repeated applications for large grants were made to the governor, which he was nowise inclined to refuse, since every new patent was attended with a liberal fee to himself. Foreseeing the mischiefs, that would result to them from this growing combination of powerful and interested individuals in New York, the settlers despatched one of their number to England as an agent in their behalf, instructed to lay their case before the King, and petition for relief. This mission was successful, so far as to obtain an order from the King in Council, July, 1767, commanding the governor of New York to abstain from issuing any more patents in the disputed territory, "upon pain of his Majesty's highest displeasure," till the intentions of the King on the subject should further be made known.

This decision, having only a prospective effect, did not annul the grants already bestowed, and the New York patentees resolved to gain possession of the lands by civil process. Writs of ejectment were taken out, and served on several of the actual occupants. In a few instances the officers were resisted by the people, and prevented from

serving the writs ; but, for the most part, the New Hampshire grantees inclined to meet their opponents on this ground, and refer the matter to a judicial tribunal. Ethan Allen, having already become a leader among them, by his zeal in opposing the New York party and by the boldness of his character, was appointed an agent to manage the concerns of the defendants before the court at Albany, to which the writs of ejectment had been returned. His first step was to proceed to New Hampshire, and obtain copies of Governor Wentworth's commission and instructions, by which he was authorized to grant the lands. He next went to Connecticut, and engaged the services of Mr. Ingersoll, an eminent counsellor of that day. When the time of trial arrived, these gentlemen appeared in Albany, and produced to the court the above papers, and also the original patents or grants to those persons on whom the writs of ejectment had been served. These papers were at once set aside, as having no weight in the case, since they presupposed that the boundary of New Hampshire reached to the west of Connecticut River, a point not to be admitted by any New York court or jury. The verdict was of course given for the plaintiffs. Indeed the whole process was an idle piece of formality. It being the theoretical and practical doctrine of the New York government, that all Governor Wentworth's grants were

illegal, and many of the judges and lawyers being personally interested in the subsequent New York patents, a decision adverse to their declared opinion of the law, and to their private interests, was not to be expected. This was soon perceived by the people of the New Hampshire Grants, and no one of them again appeared in court, though sundry other cases of ejectment were brought up, and decided against the occupants. As all their grants stood on precisely the same footing, a precedent in one case would necessarily be followed in the others.

It is recorded, that after Allen retired from the court at Albany, two or three gentlemen interested in the New York grants called upon him, one of whom was the King's attorney-general for the colony, and advised him to go home and persuade his friends of the Green Mountains to make the best terms they could with their new landlords, intimating that their cause was now desperate, and reminding him of the proverb, that "*might often prevails against right.*" Neither admiring the delicacy of this sentiment, nor intimidated by the threat it held out, Allen replied, "*The gods of the valleys are not the gods of the hills.*" This laconic figure of speech he left to be interpreted by his visitors, adding only, when an explanation was asked by the King's attorney, that if he would

accompany him to Bennington the sense should be made clear.

The purpose of his mission being thus brought to a close, Mr. Allen returned and reported the particulars to his constituents. The news spread from habitation to habitation, and created a sudden and loud murmur of discontent among the people. Seeing, as they thought, the door of justice shut against them, and having tried in vain all the peaceable means of securing their rights, they resolved to appeal to the last arbiter of disputes. The inhabitants of Bennington immediately assembled, and came to a formal determination to defend their property by force, and to unite in resisting all encroachments upon the lands occupied by persons holding titles under the warrants granted by the governor of New Hampshire. This was a bold step; but it was promptly taken, and with a seeming determination to adhere to it at any hazard, and without regard to consequences. Nor was this decision changed or weakened by a proposition on the part of the New York patentees, made about this time, which allowed to each occupant a fee simple of his farm, at the same price for which the unoccupied lands in his neighborhood were sold. The first purchasers still insisted, that this was requiring them to pay twice for their lands, and that in any view the proposal was not just, inasmuch as the value of

the unoccupied lands depended mainly on the settlements, which had been made in their vicinity by the toil and at the expense of the original occupants. In short, the time for talking about charters, and boundaries, and courts of judicature was past, and the mountaineers were now fully bent on conducting the controversy by a more summary process. The wisdom or equity of this decision I shall forbear to discuss, and proceed to narrate some of its consequences.

Actions of ejectment continued to be brought before the Albany courts; but the settlers, despairing of success after the precedents of the first cases, did not appear in defence, nor give themselves any more trouble in the matter. Next came sheriffs and civil magistrates to execute the writs of possession, and by due course of law to remove the occupants from the lands. At this crisis the affair assumed a tangible shape. The mountaineers felt themselves at home on the soil, which they had subdued by their own labor, and in the territory over which they had begun to exercise supreme dominion, by meeting in conventions and committees and taking counsel of each other on public concerns. To drive one of them from his house, or deprive him of his hard-earned substance, was to threaten the whole community with an issue fatal alike to their dearest interests, and to the rights, which every man deems as

sacred as life itself. It was no wonder, therefore that they should unite in a common cause, which it required their combined efforts to maintain.

As it was expected the sheriffs would soon make their appearance, precautions were taken to watch their motions, and give due notice of their approach. In the first instance, when the sheriff arrived at the house, on the owner of which he was to serve a writ of possession, he found it surrounded by a body of men, who resisted his attempts, and defeated his purpose. Complaints were sent to Lord Dunmore, then governor of New York, accompanied with the names of the leaders of this "riotous and tumultuous" assemblage; and the governor forthwith published a proclamation on the 1st day of November, 1770, denouncing this presumptuous act, and commanding the sheriff of Albany county to apprehend the offenders, whose names had been mentioned, and commit them to safe custody, that they might be brought to condign punishment; authorizing him to call to his assistance the *posse comitatús*, or the whole power of the county. But proclamations were of as little avail as writs of possession; and the sheriff was never lucky enough to seize any of the rioters, who doubtless had the forethought to keep out of his reach.

The next exploit was at the house of James Brackenridge, whose farm was within the township

of Bennington, and on whom the sheriff came to serve a writ. The house was filled with armed men, who treated this civil officer with much disrespect, and set his authority at naught. A few days afterwards he returned with a *posse*, such as he could collect for the purpose ; but in this instance he was again repelled by a still more numerous party armed with muskets, which they presented at the breasts of the sheriff and his associates, and exhibited other attitudes of menace and contempt, against which these pacific messengers, armed only with the mandates and terrors of the law, did not think it prudent to contend. The rioters, as they were called, and perhaps by no very forced construction of language, came off a second time triumphant ; and thus the boldness of their resolutions received a new incitement. These examples, however, did not deter the civil officers from endeavoring to discharge their duty. They appeared in other places, and in one or two instances with success ; but they could not evade the vigilance of the people, who kept a watchful eye upon their movements, and who, when they caught the intruders, resorted to a mode of punishment less perilous than that with powder and ball, but attended with scarcely less indignity to the unfortunate sufferers. This summary process was denominated *chastisement with the twigs of the wilderness*, a phraseology too significant to need explanation.

As open war now existed, and hostilities had commenced, the *Green Mountain Boys*, as the belligerents were denominated, thought it advisable to organize their forces and prepare for the contest in a manner worthy of the cause at stake. In all the feats of enterprise and danger, as well as in matters of state policy, Ethan Allen had hitherto been the chief adviser and actor. It was natural, that, in arranging their military establishment, the people should look up to him as the person best qualified to be placed at its head. He was appointed colonel-commandant, with several captains under him, of whom the most noted were Seth Warner and Remember Baker. Committees of safety were likewise chosen, and intrusted with powers for regulating local affairs. Conventions of delegates, representing the people, assembled from time to time, and passed resolves and adopted measures, which tended to harmonize their sentiments and concentrate their efforts.

Thus prepared and supported, Colonel Allen, with a promptness and activity suited to his character, drew out his volunteers in larger or smaller numbers, as the exigency of the case required, and either in person, or by the agency of his captains, presented a formidable force to the sheriffs and constables wherever they appeared within the limits of the New Hampshire Grants. The convention had decreed, that no officer from New



York should attempt to take any person out of their territory on the penalty of a severe punishment ; and it was also forbidden, that any survey or should presume to run lines through the lands, or inspect them with that intention. This edict enlarged the powers of the military commanders ; for it was their duty to search out such intruders, and chastise them according to the nature of their offence. A few straggling settlers, claiming titles under the New York grants, had ventured over the line of demarkation. These were forcibly dispossessed by detachments of Colonel Allen's men, frequently led on by him in person. The sheriffs and their *posse comitatús* continued to be pursued with unremitting eagerness, whenever they dared to set their feet on the forbidden ground. With these various affairs on his hands, it will readily be imagined that the commander of the Green Mountain Boys was not idle ; nor was it surprising, that he should attract the particular notice of the New York government. So many complaints were made of the riotous and disorderly proceedings of his volunteers and associates, such was the indignation of the New York party on account of the harsh measures adopted by them towards the persons, whom they seized as trespassers upon their property, and so entirely did they set at defiance the laws of New York, to which their opponents accounted

them amenable, that the governor was tempted to try the virtue of another proclamation, in which he branded the deed of dispossessing a New York settler with the opprobrious name of felony, and offered a reward of twenty pounds to any person, who would apprehend and secure Allen, or either of eight other persons connected with him, and mentioned by name.

Whether this proclamation was thought too mild in its terms, or whether new outrages had added to the enormity of the offence, it is not easy to decide ; but another was promulgated, enlarging the bounty for Allen to one hundred and fifty pounds, and for Seth Warner and five others to fifty pounds each. Not to be outdone by the authority of New York in exercising the prerogatives of sovereignty, Colonel Allen and his friends sent out a counter proclamation, offering a reward of five pounds to any person, who would take and deliver the attorney-general of that colony to any officer in the military association of the Green Mountain Boys ; the said attorney having rendered himself particularly obnoxious to the settlers, by the zeal and pertinacity with which he had entered into the contest against them.\* Notwithstanding the frequency of proclamations, it is believed that no person was apprehended in

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\* Ira Allen's *History of Vermont*, p. 29.

consequence of them, which is a proof that the people of the parts of New York adjoining the New Hampshire Grants were more favorable to the settlers, than were the prominent men of the colony; otherwise the allurements of the reward would have induced combinations for seizing individual offenders, particularly as the people were required by law to assist the sheriff in the execution of his office. Allen never denied, that the conduct of himself and his mountaineers, interpreted by the laws of New York, or the laws of any well ordered society, was properly called riotous; but he contended, that they were driven to this extremity by the oppression of their stronger neighbors, that no other means were left by which they could defend their property, and that under such circumstances they were perfectly justified in resorting to these means. They encroached not upon the possessions of other people, they remained on their own soil, and, if riots existed, they were caused by those, who came among them for purposes of molestation and injury. Viewing things in this light, he thought it hard, and with reason, that he should first be called a rioter, then a criminal rioter, and last of all be denounced to the world as a felon, with a price set upon his liberty, and threats of condign punishment if he should be taken.

But he was equally regardless of threats, and faithful in executing the charge reposed in him by his associates. Affairs had now been brought to such a stage, that it was the fixed determination of the settlers at all hazards to maintain their ground by expelling every person, who should presume to approach their territory under the auspices of the New York claimants. An incident occurred, which indicated the temper and spirit of the people. News came to Bennington, that Governor Tryon was ascending the North River with a body of British troops, who were on their way to subdue the refractory Green Mountain Boys, and to quell the disputes by an overwhelming force. This report at first produced alarm. The Committee of Safety and the military officers held a consultation. Their perilous situation was viewed in all its aspects, and it was finally resolved, that, considering the measures they had already pursued, and that their vital interests required a perseverance in the same, "it was their duty to oppose Governor Tryon and his troops to the utmost of their power." They immediately proceeded to devise a plan of operations, by which a few sharp-shooters were to be stationed in a narrow pass on the road leading to Bennington, who were to lie concealed and shoot down the officers as they approached with the troops. These same marksmen were then to hasten forward through

the woods, and join another party of their comrades at a similar position, where they were to exercise their unerring skill with their rifles, and then retreat to the main body, who would be prepared to receive the invading troops, much disordered and dispirited as it was supposed they would be by the loss of officers. Colonel Allen despatched a trusty person to Albany, with instructions to wait the arrival of Governor Tryon's army, to take particular note of the officers, that he might know them again, and to ascertain all that he could as to the numbers of the enemy, the time of marching, and other useful intelligence. The messenger returned with the information, that the troops were wind-bound down the river, that they were destined for the posts on the Lakes, and had no designs upon Bennington. Although the people were thus relieved from the necessity of putting their valor to the test, yet their prompt and bold preparation for the onset was a pledge, that in no event could it have terminated to their dishonor.

Affairs were proceeding in this train of civil commotion and active hostilities, when Governor Tryon, in a spirit of candor and forbearance hardly to have been expected at that crisis, wrote a letter to the inhabitants of Bennington and the adjacent country, dated on the 19th of May, 1772, censuring the illegality and violence of their conduct, but at the same time expressing a desire to

do them justice, and inviting them to send a deputation of such persons as they might choose, who should lay before him a full state of their grievances, and the causes of their complaints. To any deputies thus sent he promised security and protection, excepting Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, and three others, who had been named in his proclamation as offenders against the laws, and for apprehending whom a reward had been offered. On receiving this letter the people of Bennington and the neighboring towns assembled by their committees, took the subject into consideration, and without delay acceded to the proposal. They appointed two delegates, Stephen Fay and Jonas Fay, to repair to New York, and wrote a letter in answer to Governor Tryon's, briefly setting forth the grounds of their discontent and the reasons of their conduct, and referring to their agents for particular explanations. From the style and tone of the letter, it was obviously penned by Ethan Allen.

Neither was the opportunity to be passed over, by Allen and his proscribed friends, of vindicating themselves against the aspersions cast upon them by their enemies, and the stigma of being pointed out to the world as rioters, abettors of mobs, and felons. They sent a joint despatch to Governor Tryon, in the nature of a protest against the treatment they had received, and in justification of their motives and acts. Allen was

again the penman for his brethren, and, considering their provocations, and the degree of excitement to which they had been wrought up, their remonstrance was clothed in language sufficiently respectful, breathing the spirit of men conscious of their dignity, and resolute in the defence of their rights, but ready to meet the awards of justice and abide by the decision of a fair and impartial tribunal. Some of their arguments are put in a forcible manner. "If we do not oppose the sheriff and his *posse*," say they, "he takes immediate possession of our houses and farms; if we do, we are immediately indicted as rioters; and when others oppose officers in taking their friends so indicted, they are also indicted, and so on, there being no end of indictment against us so long as we act the bold and manly part and stand by our liberty. And it comes to this at last, that we must tamely be dispossessed, or oppose officers in taking possession, and, as a next necessary step, oppose the taking of rioters, so called, or run away like so many cowards and quit the country to a number of cringing, polite gentlemen, who have ideally possessed themselves of it already."

Again; "Though they style us rioters for opposing them, and seek to catch and punish us as such, yet in reality themselves are the rioters, the tumultuous, disorderly, stimulating faction, or in

fine the land-jobbers; and every violent act they have done to compass their designs, though ever so much under pretence of law, is in reality a violation of law, and an insult to the constitution and authority of the Crown, as well as to many of us in person, who have been great sufferers by such inhuman exertions of pretended law. Right and wrong are eternally the same to all periods of time, places, and nations; and coloring a crime with a specious pretence of law only adds to the criminality of it, for it subverts the very design of law, prostituting it to the vilest purposes."\*

These statements embraced the substance of their defence, considered in its theory and principles, although they were strengthened by a series of collateral facts and a combination of particulars, which were all made to assume a bearing favorable to the general cause. Governor Tryon received the deputies with affability and kindness, listened to their representations, and laid the matter of their grievances before his council. After due deliberation the council reported to the governor, that they wished him to give the people of the New Hampshire Grants all the relief in his power, and recommended that

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\* Ethan Allen's *Brief Narrative of the Proceedings of the Government of New York, &c.* pp. 58, 62.



the prosecutions, on account of crimes with which they were charged, should cease till his Majesty's pleasure could be ascertained, and that the New York grantees should be requested till such time to put a stop to civil suits respecting the lands in controversy. This vote of the council was approved by the governor, and with this intelligence the deputies hastened back to their constituents, who hailed them as the messengers of peace and joy. They had never asked for more than was implied by these terms, being well persuaded, that, however the question of jurisdiction might be settled, the King would never sanction a course of proceeding, which should deprive them of their property. The impulse of gladness spread quickly to the cabins of the remotest settlers; a meeting of the people was called at Bennington, where a large concourse assembled; the minutes of the council and the governor's approval were read, and applauded with loud acclamations, and for the moment the memory of all former griefs was swept away in the overflowing tide of enthusiasm for Governor Tryon. The single cannon, constituting the whole artillery of Colonel Allen's regiment, was drawn out and discharged several times in honor of the occasion; and Captain Warner's company of Green Mountain Boys, paraded in battle array, fired three volleys with small arms; the surrounding multi-

tudes at the same time answering each discharge with huzzas, and every demonstration of delight. It was accounted a day of triumph to the heroes of Bennington, and a harbinger of tranquillity to the settlers, who had hitherto been harassed by the incessant tumults of the present, or the vexatious uncertainty of the future.

But unluckily this season of rejoicing was of short duration. It was indeed premature ; for although the terms brought back by the commissioners held out an appearance of reconciliation, yet the seeds of mischief were not eradicated, and they immediately began to spring up with their former vigor. The conciliatory resolve of the governor and council moreover contained an ambiguity, which seemed at first to escape the notice of the people, in the excess of their hilarity. The New York grantees were desired to cease from prosecuting any more civil suits, till the King's pleasure should be known ; but nothing was said about putting in execution the suits already decided in their favor, and no prohibition intimated against their taking possession of lands claimed in consequence of such decisions, or sending surveyors to fix boundaries and localities. Hence it is obvious, that all the actual sources of dissension and tumult remained in their full force.

It was unfortunate, that an example occurred while the negotiation was pending. Soon after

the commissioners set off for New York, intelligence was brought to Bennington, that a noted surveyor, employed by the New York claimants, had found his way into some of the border townships, and was busy in running out lands. A small party rallied, with Colonel Allen at their head, went in pursuit of the surveyor, fell upon his track in the woods, overtook and seized him, intending to punish him in a manner suited to their ideas of the audaciousness of his offence. They broke his instruments, examined and tried him before a court organized according to their manner, found him guilty, and passed sentence of banishment, threatening the penalty of death, should he ever again be caught within the limits of the interdicted territory. At this juncture they heard of the success of the mission to New York, which occasioned them to dismiss the surveyor without personal injury, and to rescind their harsh sentence.

During this expedition Colonel Allen and his party also dispossessed the tenants of an intruder, near the mouth of Otter Creek, where, under the shield of a New York title, he had taken a saw-mill and other property from the original settlers, and appropriated them to himself, adding tenements and improvements for his laborers. Colonel Allen expelled the tenants, burnt their habitations, restored the sawmill to its first owner, and broke

the millstones of a gristmill, which he could not burn without endangering the sawmill.

The fame of these exploits travelled with speed to New York, and kindled the anger of Governor Tryon and the members of his council. The governor wrote a letter of sharp rebuke to the inhabitants of the Grants, complaining of this conduct as an insult to government, and a violation of public faith. This letter was taken into consideration by the committees of several townships assembled at Manchester, who voted to return an answer, which was drafted by Ethan Allen, secretary to the convention. In regard to the prominent points, Mr. Allen argued in behalf of his associates, that the public faith was not plighted on their part, till after the ratification at Bennington of the terms brought back by their commissioners, and that the transactions so severely censured took place previously to that event. If there was any breach of faith in the case, it was declared to have been on the part of the land-jobbers in New York, who sent a surveyor into the disputed domain, while the commissioners were negotiating for a reconciliation of differences. As to putting the intruders at Otter Creek again into possession, which the governor had demanded in a somewhat peremptory manner, they declined doing it, assigning as a reason that those persons were justly removed, and that the

governor could not fail to be of the same opinion when duly informed of facts. The assembled committees moreover declared explicitly, that, by the terms of reconciliation, they did not expect any settlements or locations would be attempted on the lands in question, till his Majesty's pleasure should be known. If such were not the meaning and intent of the governor, in the proposal he had sent by the commissioners, then their act of ratification was a nullity.

To put the matter on this footing was at once to revive all the old difficulties ; for the governor had no power to stop the course of law, by prohibiting those persons from taking possession of their lands, who had been confirmed in their claims by the regular decisions of the courts. All such claimants, and agents acting in their behalf, the settlers had determined to resist by force, and had given practical proofs of their resolution, which were not to be mistaken. They had also resolved to pursue, expel, or otherwise punish any person within the disputed district, who should presume to accept an office civil or military under the authority of New York. Like the Tories of the Revolution, these people were considered as the worst kind of enemies, and treated with uncommon severity. In an unlucky hour two or three of them accepted from Governor Tryon commissions of justices of the peace,

and had the hardihood to act in their official dignity. The indignation and wrath of the Green Mountain Boys were roused. In one instance the unhappy delinquent was brought before the Committee of Safety, where the resolve of the convention was read to him, forbidding any one in the territory to hold an office under the colony of New York ; and then judgment was pronounced against him, in the presence of many persons, by which he was sentenced to be tied to a tree, and chastised "with the twigs of the wilderness" on his naked back, to the number of two hundred stripes, and immediately expelled from the district, and threatened with death if he should return, unless specially permitted by the Convention.

In the midst of these rigors, the mode of punishment was sometimes rather ludicrous than severe. In the town of Arlington lived a doctor, who openly professed himself a partisan of New York, and was accustomed to speak disrespectfully of the convention and committees, espousing the cause of the New York claimants, and advising people to purchase lands under their title. He was admonished by his neighbors, and made to understand, that this tone of conversation was not acceptable, and was requested to change it, or at least to show his prudence by remaining silent. Far from operating any reform, these

hints only stirred up the ire of the courageous doctor, who forthwith armed himself with pistols and other weapons of defence, proclaiming his sentiments more boldly than ever, setting opposition at defiance, and threatening to try the full effects of his personal prowess and implements of warfare on any man, who should have the temerity to approach him with an unfriendly design. Such a boast was likely to call up the martial spirit of his opponents, who accordingly came upon the doctor at an unguarded moment, and obliged him to surrender at discretion. He was thence transferred to the Green Mountain Tavern, in Bennington, where he was arraigned before the committee, who, not satisfied with his defence, sentenced him to a novel punishment, which they ordered to be put in immediate execution.

Before the door of this tavern, which served the double purpose of a court-house and an inn, stood a signpost twenty-five feet high, the top of which was adorned with the skin of a catamount, stuffed to the size of life, with its head turned towards New York, and its jaws distended, showing large naked teeth, and grinning terror to all who should approach from that quarter. It was the judgment of the court, that the contumacious doctor should be tied in a chair, and drawn up by a rope to the catamount, where he was to remain suspended two hours; which punishment

was inflicted, in the presence of a numerous assemblage of people, much to their satisfaction and merriment. The doctor was then let down, and permitted to depart to his own house.

On two or three occasions Colonel Allen was near being taken, in consequence of the rewards offered for him in the governor's proclamations. When he made excursions abroad, whether for military or other purposes, he commonly went armed with a musket and a brace of pistols. Being on a tour to the north, in company with a single friend, he one evening entered a house not many miles from Crown Point, in which, to his surprise and after it was too late to retreat, he found there were two sergeants and ten men. He was known to the sergeants, and soon had reason to suspect, that they intended to seize him. Putting the best face upon the matter, however, and concealing his suspicions, he called for supper, conversed in great good humor with the sergeants, asked them to drink with him, and the evening passed away merrily till bedtime. It then appeared, that there were no spare beds in the house, as they had all been taken by the first comers ; but these persons very civilly proposed to yield their claims to Colonel Allen, and pressed him with a show of earnestness to accept their offer. He declined it, with thanks for their courtesy, declaring that he could not think of depriv-



ing them of their rest merely for his personal accommodation, and that, as the weather was warm, he and his companion would seek lodgings in the barn. To hide their real design they left their guns behind. The sergeants accompanied them to the barn, saw them safely in their quarters, wished them a good night's repose, and returned to the house. By a previous concert a young girl in the family took the first opportunity unseen to carry the guns to the barn. The sergeants waited till they supposed the two travellers were asleep, and that there would be no danger from their pistols, and then stole softly out, flushed with the prospect of speedily entrapping the renowned leader of the Green Mountain Boys. But their imaginary victory ended in disappointment. Colonel Allen, having succeeded in his scheme of deceiving his pursuers, had arisen and departed, and the night screened him from their search.

At another time, while he was on a visit to his brother in Salisbury, Connecticut, a plot was laid by several persons, residing between that place and Hudson's River, to come upon him by surprise, seize, and carry him to Poughkeepsie jail. This plot was accidentally discovered in time to defeat the designs of the conspirators.

Meantime the spirit of hostility between the two parties continued to increase, the New York

claimants being resolved to enforce their claims by all the power they could put in action, and the original settlers equally determined to resist aggression by every species of force, which they could wield. Hence commotions, riots, mobs, and bloodshed were common occurrences, though the settlers adhered strictly to their declared principle of acting on the defensive, never pursuing offenders beyond their own domain, but showing little mercy to those, who dared to violate their decrees, question their authority, and above all to step over the line of demarkation as the agents of their enemies. At last the New York grantees, discouraged with this mode of conducting so fruitless a contest, combined their influence, and applied to the Assembly of that province for legislative aid. The result was a law, purporting to be an act for preventing tumultuous and riotous assemblies, and punishing rioters, which may safely be pronounced the most extraordinary specimen of legislative despotism, that has ever found a place in a statute-book. After naming Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, Remember Baker, and several others, as the principal ringleaders in the riots, the law empowers the governor and council to send out an order, requiring those persons, or any others indicted for offences, to surrender themselves for commitment to one of his Majesty's justices of the peace within seventy days from

the date of the order ; and in case the summons should not be obeyed, the person neglecting to surrender himself was to be adjudged and deemed as convicted, and to suffer death if indicted for a capital offence ; and moreover the Supreme Court was authorized to award execution, in the same manner as if there had been an actual trial, proof of guilt, and a judicial sentence.\*

On the same day that this law was enacted, the governor sent out another proclamation, offering a reward for apprehending and imprisoning Ethan Allen and seven of his associates, as if never tired of exercising this prerogative of his office, although hitherto without the least shadow of success. The object of the law and of the proclamation was to draw from their strong-holds the principal rioters, as they were called, and inflict upon them such punishments as would quell their opposition, and dishearten their followers. The effect was far otherwise. The committees of the several townships assembled in convention, and took up the subject with more calmness, than could have been anticipated under circumstances so irritating. They reviewed the causes of the

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\* This act, certainly one of the most curious in the annals of legislation, was passed on the 9th of March, 1774, and may be seen in Ethan Allen's *Narrative of the Proceedings of the Government of New York, &c.*, p. 23. And also in Slade's *Vermont State Papers*, p. 42.

controversy, asserted anew their rights, affirmed that they were not the aggressors, that all the violence to which they had been accessory was fully justified by the laws of self-preservation, and that they were determined to maintain the ground they had taken, without fear or favor, at every hazard and every sacrifice. They closed their public proceedings by a resolve, that all necessary preparations should be made, and that the inhabitants should hold themselves in readiness at a minute's warning to defend those among them, "who, for their merit in the great and general cause, had been falsely denominated rioters;" declaring at the same time, that they would act only on the defensive, and that in all civil cases, and criminal prosecutions really such, they would assist the proper officers to enforce the execution of the laws.

In addition to these public doings of the people at large by their representatives, the proscribed persons, at the head of whom was Ethan Allen, published a manifesto, to which they jointly affixed their names, containing a defence of themselves and free remarks on the New York act and proclamation. To look for moderation as a shining quality in a paper of this kind, is perhaps more than would be authorized by the nature of the case, or the character of the individuals concerned; yet it expresses sentiments, which we

should be sorry not to find in men, whom we would respect, and in whom we would confide in the hour of peril. It speaks in a tone of deep complaint of the injuries they have suffered from the vindictive persecutions of their enemies, protests against the tyrannical abuse of power, which would arraign them as criminals for protecting their own property, and threatens retaliation upon all, who should attempt to put in execution against them the sanguinary edict of the New York Assembly. But in the midst of the sea of dangers, with which they seemed to be surrounded, they braced themselves up with the consolatory reflection, "that printed sentences of death will not kill us; and if the executioners approach us, they will be as likely to fall victims to death as we." They furthermore proclaimed, that, should any person be tempted, by the "wages of unrighteousness offered in the proclamation," to apprehend any of them or their friends, it was their deliberate purpose to inflict immediate death upon so rash and guilty an offender.

To this pitch of legalized infatuation on the one part, and of animosity and violence on the other, had the controversy attained by imbibing new aliment at every stage, when it was suddenly arrested by events of vastly greater moment, which drew away the attention of the political leaders in New York from these border feuds to

affairs of more vital interest. The revolutionary struggle was on the eve of breaking out, and the ferment, which had already begun to agitate the public mind from one end of the continent to the other, was not less active in New York than in other places. From this time, therefore, the Green Mountain settlers were permitted to remain in comparative tranquillity. Several years elapsed, it is true, before they released themselves entirely from the claims of their neighbors, and established their independence on an undisputed basis; yet they always acted as an independent community, assumed and exercised the powers of a separate body politic, and secured at last, to the fullest extent, their original demands and pretensions. Ethan Allen had a large share in bringing the contest to its happy termination; but before we proceed any further with this subject, it is necessary to follow him through a different career, and trace the series of incidents, which befell him in the war of the Revolution.

At this point in our narrative, however, it is proper to turn our attention for a moment to a literary performance by Ethan Allen, which had some influence in its day, and which is still valuable for the historical matter it embodies. Having zealously embarked in the cause of the Green Mountain Boys, to which he was prompted both by interest and ambition, he applied his vigorous

mind to a thorough investigation of the subject. He pursued his researches into the ancient charters, followed out their bearings upon each other in regard to boundary lines, studied the history of the colonies, and thus collected a mass of authentic materials, which, with an account of recent events known to him personally, he compiled into a volume extending to more than two hundred pages. He, who in this work shall expect to find flowers of rhetoric, or a polished diction, or models of grammatical accuracy, or the art of a practised writer, will be disappointed; but, clothed in the garb of an unformed style and confused method, there are many sagacious remarks and pertinent expressions, many strong points of argument stated with force, if not with elegance, many evidences of a mind accustomed to observe and think, draw its own inferences, and utter its sentiments with a fearless reliance on its own resources and guidance.\*

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\* The work is entitled *A Brief Narrative of the Proceedings of the Government of New York, &c.*, printed at Hartford, 1774. The supplementary part contains a reply to a pamphlet published a short time before in New York, by authority, entitled *A State of the Right of the Colony of New York, with Respect to its Eastern Boundary, &c.* It is hardly necessary to observe, that the particulars of the present memoir have thus far been chiefly derived from these two publications; to which may be added Ira Allen's *History of Vermont*.

Early in the year 1775, as soon as it was made manifest by the attitude assumed on the part of the British government against the colonies, and by the conduct of General Gage in Boston, that open hostilities must inevitably commence in a short time, it began to be secretly whispered among the principal politicians in New England, that the capture of Ticonderoga was an object demanding the first attention. In the month of March, Samuel Adams and Dr. Joseph Warren, as members of the Committee of Correspondence in Boston, sent an agent privately into Canada, on a political mission, with instructions to ascertain the feelings of the people there in regard to the approaching contest, and to make such reports as his observations should warrant. Faithful to his charge, and vigilant in his inquiries, this agent sent back intelligence from Montreal, and among other things advised, that by all means the garrison of Ticonderoga should be seized as quickly as possible after the breaking out of hostilities, adding that the people of the New Hampshire Grants had already agreed to undertake the task, and that they were the most proper persons to be employed in it.

This hint was given three weeks anterior to the battle of Lexington, and how far it influenced future designs may not be known ; but it is certain, that, eight days after that event, several gentle-



men at that time attending the Assembly in Hartford, Connecticut, concerted a plan for surprising Ticonderoga, and seizing the cannon in that fortress, for the use of the army, then marching from all quarters to the environs of Boston. Although these gentlemen were members of the Assembly, yet the scheme was wholly of a private nature, without any overt sanction from the authority of the colony. A committee was appointed, at the head of which were Edward Mott and Noah Phelps, with instructions to proceed to the frontier towns, inquire into the state of the garrison, and, should they think proper, to raise men and take possession of the same. To aid the project, one thousand dollars were obtained from the treasury as a loan, for which security was given.

On their way the committee collected sixteen men in Connecticut, and went forward to Pittsfield, in Massachusetts, where they laid open their plan to Colonel Easton and Mr. John Brown, who agreed to join them, and they proceeded in company to Bennington. Colonel Easton, being in command of a regiment of militia, proposed to engage some of them in the expedition, and enlisted volunteers as he passed along, between forty and fifty of whom reached Bennington the next day. As no time was to be lost, a council of war was immediately called, in which it was voted that Colonel Ethan Allen should send out par-

ties to the northward, secure the roads, and prevent intelligence from passing in that direction. This was accordingly done. Colonel Allen's Green Mountain Boys having been collected as speedily as possible, the little army marched, and arrived at Castleton on the evening of the 7th of May.

Here another council of war was held, and Ethan Allen was appointed the commander of the expedition, James Easton the second in command, and Seth Warner the third. Being thus organized they proceeded to fix a plan of operations. It was decided that Colonel Allen and the principal officers, with the main body of their forces, consisting of about one hundred and forty men, should march directly to Shoreham, opposite to Ticonderoga. A party of thirty men, commanded by Captain Herrick, was at the same time to move upon Skenesborough, take Major Skene\* and his people into custody, seize all the boats that could be found there, and hasten with them down the Lake to meet Colonel Allen at Shoreham. Captain Douglass was also despatched to Panton, beyond Crown Point, in search of boats, which were to be brought to Shoreham, as it was supposed the boats at that place would

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\* The son of Governor Skene, who was likewise called Major Skene, and who was at this time absent in England.

be inadequate to the transportation of the troops across the Lake.

The position now occupied was nine miles from Skenesborough, and twenty-five from Ticonderoga by the route to be traversed. Just as these arrangements were settled, the men selected for each party, and the whole prepared to march, Colonel Arnold arrived from Massachusetts, having been commissioned by the Committee of Safety of that colony, without any knowledge of what had been done in Connecticut, to raise men and proceed on the same enterprise. He brought no men with him, but had agreed with officers in Stockbridge to enlist and send forward such as could be obtained, making all haste himself to join the expedition, which he did not hear was on foot till he came to that town. A difficulty now arose, which threatened for the moment to defeat the whole scheme. Arnold claimed the command of all the troops, by virtue of his commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, averring that this was a superior appointment to that of any other officer concerned, and demanding the preference as his right. The rumor soon got to the ears of the soldiers, who broke out into vehement clamors, and were on the point of a mutiny, declaring that they would serve under no officers except those with whom they had engaged, and that they would club

their muskets and march home. The flame was quenched by the prudent conduct of Colonels Allen and Easton ; and when Arnold discovered, that his pretensions met with no favor either from the men or their leaders, he yielded to necessity and agreed to unite with them as a volunteer.

The march was pursued according to the original plan, and Colonel Allen arrived without molestation on the shore of the Lake opposite to Ticonderoga. It was important to have a guide, who was acquainted with the grounds around the fortress, and the places of access. Allen made inquiries as to these points of Mr. Beman, a farmer residing near the Lake in Shoreham, who answered, that he seldom crossed to Ticonderoga, and was little acquainted with the particulars of its situation ; but that his son Nathan, a young lad, passed much of his time there in company with the boys of the garrison. Nathan was called, and appeared by his answers to be familiar with every nook in the fort, and every passage and by-path by which it could be approached. In the eye of Colonel Allen he was the very person to thread out the best avenue ; and by the consent of the father and a little persuasion Nathan Beman was engaged to be the guide of the party. The next step was to procure boats, which were very deficient in number, as neither Captain Herick nor Captain Douglass had sent any from

Skenesborough or Panton. Eighty-three men only had crossed, when the day began to dawn ; and while the boats were sent back for the rear division, Colonel Allen resolved to move immediately against the fort.

He drew up his men in three ranks, addressed them in a short harangue, ordered them to face to the right, and, placing himself at the head of the middle file, led them silently but with a quick step up the heights on which the fortress stood, and before the sun rose he had entered the gate and formed his men on the parade between the barracks. Here they gave three huzzas, which aroused the sleeping inmates. When Colonel Allen passed the gate, a sentinel snapped his fusée at him, and then retreated under a covered way. Another sentinel made a thrust at an officer with a bayonet, which slightly wounded him. Colonel Allen returned the compliment with a cut on the side of the soldier's head, at which he threw down his musket and asked quarter. No more resistance was made. Allen demanded to be shown to the apartment of Captain Delaplace, the commandant of the garrison. It was pointed out, and Colonel Allen, with Nathan Beman at his elbow, who knew the way, hastily ascended the stairs, which were attached to the outside of the barracks, and called out with a voice of thunder at the door, ordering the astonished captain

instantly to appear, or the whole garrison should be sacrificed. Started at so strange and unexpected a summons, he sprang from his bed and opened the door, when the first salutation of his boisterous and unseasonable visitor was an order immediately to surrender the fort. Rubbing his eyes and trying to collect his scattered senses, the captain asked by what authority he presumed to make such a demand. "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress," replied Allen. Not accustomed to hear much of the Continental Congress in this remote corner, nor to respect its authority when he did, the commandant began to speak ; but Colonel Allen cut short the thread of his discourse by lifting his sword over his head, and reiterating the demand for an immediate surrender. Having neither permission to argue nor power to resist, Captain Delaplace submitted, ordering his men to parade without arms, and the garrison was given up to the victors.\*

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\* The facts respecting Nathan Beman were related to me by a gentleman, who received them from Nathan Beman himself. Whether this exploit of his boyhood was the only one performed by him during the war, I know not ; but his martial aptitude was displayed in another career, he having been for many years a noted hunter of wolves, on the northern borders of New York between Lakes Champlain and Ontario.

This surprise was effected about four o'clock in the morning of the 10th of May. Warner crossed the Lake with the remainder of the troops, and marched up to the fort. The whole number of men under Colonel Allen, as reported by the committee on the spot, in a letter to the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, dated the day after the assault, was one hundred and forty from the New Hampshire Grants, and seventy from Massachusetts, besides sixteen from Connecticut. The prisoners were one captain, one lieutenant, and forty-eight subalterns and privates, exclusive of women and children. They were all sent to Hartford, in Connecticut. The principal advantage of the capture, except that of possessing the post, was one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, also swivels, mortars, small arms, and stores. The cannon only were of much importance.

As soon as the prisoners were secured, and the bustle of the occasion had a little subsided, Colonel Allen sent off Warner with a detachment of men to take Crown Point. Strong head-winds drove back the boats, and the whole party returned the same evening. The attempt was renewed a day or two afterwards, and proved successful. A sergeant and eleven men, being the whole garrison, were made prisoners. Sixty-one good cannon were found there, and fifty-three unfit for service. Previously to this affair, Colonel

Allen had sent a messenger to Captain Remember Baker, who was at Onion River, requesting him to join the army at Ticonderoga with as large a number of men as he could assemble. Baker obeyed the summons ; and when he was coming up the Lake with his party, he met two small boats, which had been despatched from Crown Point to carry intelligence of the reduction of Ticonderoga to St. John's and Montreal, and solicit reinforcements. The boats were seized by Baker, and he arrived at Crown Point just in time to unite with Warner in taking possession of that post.

Thus the main object of the expedition was attained ; but the troubles of the leaders were not at an end. No sooner had the fort surrendered, than Arnold assumed the command, affirming that he was the only officer invested with legal authority. His pretensions were not heeded, and although he was vehement and positive, yet it was in vain to issue orders, which nobody would obey ; and finally he consented to a sort of divided control between Colonel Allen and himself, he acting as a subordinate, but not wholly without official consideration. He had behaved with bravery in the assault, marching on the left of Colonel Allen, and entering the fortress side by side with him. When the Connecticut committee perceived his design, they repelled it upon the principle, that the gov-



ernment of Massachusetts had no concern in the matter, that the men from that colony under Colonel Easton were paid by Connecticut, and that he could be considered in no other light than a volunteer. The same committee installed Colonel Allen anew in the command of Ticonderoga and its dependencies, which by a formal commission they authorized him to retain, till Connecticut or the Continental Congress should send him instructions. A narrative of the particulars was despatched by an express to the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, who confirmed the appointment, and directed Arnold not to interfere.

The party that went to Skenesborough came unawares upon Major Skene the younger, whom they took prisoner, seizing likewise a schooner and several batteaux, with all which they hastened to Ticonderoga. Allen and Arnold now formed a plan to make a rapid push upon St. John's, take a king's sloop that lay there, and attempt a descent upon the garrison. The schooner and batteaux were armed and manned ; and, as Arnold had been a seaman in his youth, the command of the schooner was assigned to him, while the batteaux were committed to the charge of Allen. They left Ticonderoga nearly at the same time, but the wind being fresh the schooner outsailed the batteaux. At eight o'clock on the evening of the 17th of May, Arnold was within thirty miles of

St. John's ; and, as the weather was calm, he fitted out two batteaux with thirty-five men, leaving the schooner behind and proceeding to St. John's, where he arrived at six o'clock the next morning, surprised and took a sergeant and twelve men, and the king's sloop of about seventy tons with two brass six-pounders and seven men, without any loss on either side. The wind proving favorable, he stayed but two hours and then returned, taking with him the sloop, four batteaux, and some valuable stores, having destroyed five batteaux, being all that remained. He was induced to hasten away, because large reinforcements were momentarily expected from Montreal and Chamblee.

About fifteen miles from St. John's he met Colonel Allen, pressing onward with his party. A salute of three discharges of cannon on the one side, and three volleys of musketry on the other, was fired, and Allen paid Arnold a visit on board the king's sloop. After inquiring into the situation of things, Allen determined to proceed to St. John's and keep possession there with about one hundred men. He arrived just before night, landed his party, and marched about a mile towards Laprairie, where he formed an ambuscade to intercept the reinforcements hourly expected. But finding his men greatly fatigued, and ascertaining that a force much superior to his own was on its approach, he retired to the other side of the

river. In this position he was attacked early in the morning by two hundred men, and driven to his boats, with which he returned to Ticonderoga. His loss was three men taken prisoners, one of whom escaped in a few days.

While this train of events was in progress, Colonel Easton had repaired to Massachusetts and Connecticut, instructed by Colonel Allen and the committee to explain to the governments of those colonies the transactions attending the capture of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and to solicit aids to secure these conquests. Since the affair had begun in Connecticut, the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts seemed well inclined to let that colony have both the honor and burden of maintaining the acquisitions, which had been gained under her auspices, and wrote to the governor of Connecticut, disclaiming all motives of interference, and recommending the business to his special charge. Governor Trumbull immediately prepared for sending up a reinforcement of four hundred men. But in truth, neither party was ambitious of assuming the responsibility of further operations, till the views and intentions of the Continental Congress should be known. Messengers were accordingly despatched to Philadelphia; and also to the Convention of New York, in which province the conquered posts were situate. Policy as well as courtesy required that New

York should be consulted, since the coöperation of that colony was essential to the harmony and success of any future measures. The Continental Congress approved what had been done, and requested Governor Trumbull to send a body of troops to Lake Champlain, sufficient to defend the garrisons of Ticonderoga and Crown Point, till further orders from the Congress, and at the same time desired the Convention of New York to supply the said troops with provisions. This arrangement was carried into effect, and one thousand troops were ordered to march from Connecticut under the command of Colonel Hinman.

Meantime Allen and Arnold kept their stations, the former as commander-in-chief at Ticonderoga, and the latter at Crown Point, where he acted the part rather of a naval than of a military officer, having under his care the armed sloop and schooner, which had been taken, and a small flotilla of batteaux. Some of Colonel Allen's men went home, but others came in, both from the New Hampshire Grants, and from Albany county, so that his numbers increased. A few men also joined Arnold, whom he had engaged in Massachusetts, when he crossed the country to execute the commission of the Committee of Safety.

Flushed with his successes, and eager to pursue them, Colonel Allen began to extend his views more widely, and to think of the conquest of

Canada. Persuaded that such an undertaking was feasible, and foreseeing its immense importance to the cause in which the country was now openly embarked, he wrote the following letter to the Provincial Congress of New York.

"Crown Point, 2 June, 1775.

"GENTLEMEN,

"Before this time you have undoubtedly received intelligence, not only of the taking of the fortified places on Lake Champlain, but also of the armed sloop and boats therein, and the taking possession of a schooner, which is the property of Major Skene, which has been armed and manned, and of the conversion of them, with a large train of artillery, to the defence of the liberty and the constitutional rights of America. You have likewise undoubtedly been informed, that the expedition was undertaken at the special encouragement and request of a number of respectable gentlemen in the colony of Connecticut. The pork forwarded to subsist the army by your directions evinces your approbation of the procedure; and, as it was a private expedition, and common fame reports that there is a number of overgrown Tories in the province, you will the readier excuse me in not taking your advice in the matter, lest the enterprise might have been prevented by their treachery. It is here reported, that some of them

have been converted, and that others have lost their influence.

“ If in those achievements there be any thing honorary, the subjects of your government, namely, the New Hampshire settlers, are justly entitled to a large share, as they had a great majority of the soldiery, as well as the command, in making those acquisitions ; and, as you justify and approve the same, I expect you already have or soon will lay before the grand Continental Congress the great disadvantage it must inevitably be to the colonies to evacuate Lake Champlain, and give up to the enemies of our country those invaluable acquisitions, the key either of Canada or of our own country, according to which party holds the same in possession, and makes a proper improvement of it. The key is ours as yet, and provided the colonies would suddenly push an army of two or three thousand men into Canada, they might make a conquest of all that would oppose them, in the extensive province of Quebec, unless reinforcements from England should prevent it. Such a division would weaken General Gage, or insure us Canada. I would lay my life on it, that with fifteen hundred men I could take Montreal. Provided I could be thus furnished, and an army could take the field, it would be no insuperable difficulty to take Quebec.

“This object should be pursued, though it should take ten thousand men, for England cannot spare but a certain number of her troops; nay, she has but a small number that are disciplined, and it is as long as it is broad, the more that are sent to Quebec, the less they can send to Boston, or any other part of the continent. And there will be this unspeakable advantage in directing the war into Canada, that, instead of turning the Canadians and Indians against us, as is wrongly suggested by many, it would unavoidably attach and connect them to our interest. Our friends in Canada can never help us, until we first help them, except in a passive or inactive manner. There are now about seven hundred regular troops in Canada.

“It may be thought, that to push an army into Canada would be too premature and imprudent. If so, I propose to make a stand at the Isle-aux-Noix, which the French fortified by intrenchments the last war, and greatly fatigued our large army to take it. It is about fifteen miles on this side of St. John's, and is an island in the river, on which a small artillery placed would command it. An establishment on a frontier, so far north, would not only better secure our own frontier, but put it in our power better to work our policy with the Canadians and Indians, or, if need be, to make incursions into the territory of Canada, the same

as they could into our country, provided they had the sovereignty of Lake Champlain, and had erected head-quarters at or near Skenesborough. Our only having it in our power, thus to make incursions into Canada, might probably be the very reason why it would be unnecessary so to do, even if the Canadians should prove more refractory than I think for.

“Lastly, I would propose to you to raise a small regiment of rangers, which I could easily do, and that mostly in the counties of Albany and Charlotte, provided you should think it expedient to grant commissions, and thus regulate and put them under pay. Probably you may think this an impertinent proposal. It is truly the first favor I ever asked of the government, and, if granted, I shall be zealously ambitious to conduct for the best good of my country, and the honor of the government. I am, Gentlemen, &c.

“ETHAN ALLEN.”

In forming an estimate of this letter, it is to be remembered, that no person had as yet ventured publicly to recommend an invasion of Canada. It had in fact hitherto been the policy of Congress to give as little offence to the Canadians as possible, this course being thought the most likely to conciliate their friendship. A resolve passed that assembly, the day before the above letter was



written, expressing a decided opinion, that no colony or body of colonists ought to countenance any incursion into Canada. The same sentiments had been declared in a public manner by the New York Provincial Congress. Ethan Allen's letter, therefore, had little chance of meeting with favor from the persons to whom it was addressed. The merit of being the first to suggest plans, which were afterwards adopted by the national councils, as of great political moment, was nevertheless due to him. Before the end of three months from the date of his letter, an expedition against Canada was set on foot by Congress, and seconded by the voice of the whole nation. Colonel Allen's advice was deemed bold and incautious when it was given, but subsequent events proved, that its basis was wisdom and forethought; and had it been heeded, and a competent force pushed immediately into Canada, before the British had time to rally and concentrate their scattered forces, few in numbers and imperfectly organized, there can be no reasonable doubt, that the campaign would have been successful, instead of the disastrous failure, which actually ensued, and which may be ascribed more to the wavering sentiments and tardy motions of Congress in projecting and maturing the expedition, than to any defect in the plan or in the manner of its execution.

As Colonel Allen knew it was at this time the prevailing policy to secure the neutrality of the Canadians, he made no hostile demonstrations towards Canada, after the prudent measure in conjunction with Arnold of seizing all the watercraft at St. John's ; unless the sending of a reconnoitring party over the line may be considered a belligerent act. It is evident, however, that he did not look upon it in that light ; for when his party of four men returned, and reported that they had been fired upon by about thirty Canadians, he interpreted it as a breach of peace on the side of the assailants. Embracing this as a fit opportunity, he wrote a paper, combining the two properties of a complaint and an address, which was signed by him and Colonel Easton, and despatched to a confidential person at Montreal, with directions to have it translated into French and circulated among the people. The idea of neutrality was put forward in this paper, as the one which the Canadians ought to cherish, since they had no direct interest in taking part with the English, and certainly no cause for joining in a quarrel against their neighbors of the other colonies.

The troops from Connecticut under Colonel Hinman at length arrived at Ticonderoga, and Colonel Allen's command ceased. His men chiefly returned home, their term of service having

expired. He and Seth Warner set off on a journey to the Continental Congress, with the design of procuring pay for the soldiers, who had served under them, and of soliciting authority to raise a new regiment in the New Hampshire Grants. In both these objects they were successful. By an order of Congress they were introduced on the floor of the House, and they communicated verbally to the members such information as was desired. Congress voted to allow the men, who had been employed in taking and garrisoning Ticonderoga and Crown Point, the same pay as was received by officers and privates in the American army; and also recommended to the Provincial Congress of New York, that, after consulting with General Schuyler, "they should employ in the army to be raised for the defence of America those called Green Mountain Boys, under such officers as the said Green Mountain Boys should choose." This matter was referred to the government of New York, that no controversy might arise about jurisdiction, at a time when affairs of vastly greater moment demanded the attention of all parties.

Allen and Warner repaired without delay to the New York Congress, presented themselves at the door of the hall, and requested an audience, the resolve of the Continental Congress having already been received and discussed. An embar-

rassing difficulty now arose among the members, which caused much warmth of debate. The persons, who asked admittance, were outlaws by an existing act of the legislature of New York, and, although the Provincial Congress was a distinct body from the old assembly, organized in opposition to it, and holding its recent principles and doings in detestation, yet some members had scruples on the subject of disregarding in so palpable a manner the laws of the land, as to join in a public conference with men, who had been proclaimed by the highest authority in the colony to be rioters and felons. There was also another party, whose feelings and interest were enlisted on the side of their scruples, who had taken an active part in the contest, and whose antipathies were too deeply rooted to be at once eradicated. On the other hand, the ardent friends of liberty, who regarded the great cause at stake as paramount to every thing else, and who were willing to show their disrespect for the old assembly, argued not only the injustice but tyranny of the act in question, and represented in strong colors the extreme impolicy of permitting ancient feuds to mar the harmony and obstruct the concert of action, so necessary for attaining the grand object of the wishes and efforts of every member present. In the midst of the debate, Captain Sears moved that Ethan Allen should

be admitted to the floor of the House. The motion was seconded by Melancton Smith, and was carried by a majority of two to one. A similar motion prevailed in regard to Seth Warner.

When these gentlemen had addressed the House they withdrew, and it was resolved, that a regiment of Green Mountain Boys should be raised, not exceeding five hundred men, and to consist of seven companies. They were to choose their own officers, except the field-officers, who were to be appointed by the Congress of New York ; but it was requested that the people would nominate such persons as they approved. A lieutenant-colonel was to be the highest officer. The execution of the resolve was referred to General Schuyler, who immediately gave notice to the inhabitants of the Grants, and ordered them to proceed in organizing the regiment.

Meantime Allen and Warner had finished their mission, and returned to their friends. The committees of several townships assembled at Dorset to choose officers for the new regiment. The choice fell on Seth Warner for lieutenant-colonel, and on Samuel Safford for major. This nomination was confirmed by the New York Congress. Whether Colonel Allen declined being a candidate, or whether it was expected that the regiment would ultimately have a colonel, and that he would be advanced to that post, or wheth-

er his name was omitted for any other reason, I have no means of determining. At any rate he was not attached to the regiment, and in a few days he joined General Schuyler at Ticonderoga as a volunteer. He wrote a letter of thanks to the New York Congress in the following words. "When I reflect on the unhappy controversy, which has many years subsisted between the government of New York, and the settlers on the New Hampshire Grants, and also contemplate the friendship and union that have lately taken place, in making a united resistance against ministerial vengeance and slavery, I cannot but indulge fond hopes of a reconciliation. To promote this salutary end I shall contribute my influence, assuring you, that your respectful treatment not only to Mr. Warner and myself, but to the Green Mountain Boys in general in forming them into a battalion, is by them duly regarded; and I will be responsible, that they will reciprocate this favor by boldly hazarding their lives, if need be, in the common cause of America."

Knowing the value of Colonel Allen's experience and activity, General Schuyler persuaded him to remain in the army, chiefly with the view of acting as a pioneer among the Canadians. In pursuance of this design, as soon as the army reached Isle-aux-Noix, an address to the people of Canada was written by General Schuyler, the

drift of which was to convince them that the invasion was exclusively against the British, and in no degree intended as an encroachment on the rights and liberties of the ancient inhabitants. On the contrary they were invited to unite with the Americans, and participate in the honorable enterprise of throwing off the shackles of an oppressive government, asserting the claims of justice, and securing the enjoyment of freedom. This address was committed to the hands of Ethan Allen, who was instructed to proceed with it into Canada, make it known to the inhabitants in such a manner as his discretion should dictate, and ascertain as far as he could their temper and sentiments.

He went first to Chamblee, where he found many persons friendly to the American cause, and among them several men of the first respectability and influence. He was visited by these gentlemen, and by the militia captains in that neighborhood, who seemed well disposed to join with the Americans, if there was any chance of their coming forward in such numbers as to hold out a probability of success. They furnished Colonel Allen with a guard, who constantly attended him under arms, and escorted him through the woods. He sent a messenger to the chiefs of the Caghnawaga Indians, proffering to them peace and friendship. They returned the compliment by delegating two

of their tribe, with beads and a belt of wampum, to hold a conference with Colonel Allen and confirm the friendly disposition of the Caghnawagas. The ceremony was performed with much parade and solemnity, according to the Indian manner. After spending eight days on this mission, traversing different parts of the country between the Sorel and St. Lawrence, and conversing with many persons, Colonel Allen returned to the army at Isle-aux-Noix. The result of his observation was, that, should the American army invest St. John's, and advance into Canada with a respectable force, a large number of the inhabitants would immediately join in arms with the Americans; but till such a movement should be made, it was not likely that there would be any open indications of hostility to the British power. His conduct in executing this service was approved by General Schuyler.

Just at this time the command of the Canada expedition devolved on General Montgomery, who advanced to St. John's, and laid siege to that garrison. Colonel Allen was immediately despatched to retrace his steps, penetrate the country, and raise as many of the inhabitants as he could to unite in arms with the American forces. He had been absent a week, when he wrote as follows to General Montgomery.



“I am now at the parish of St. Ours, four leagues from Sorel to the south. I have two hundred and fifty Canadians under arms. As I march, they gather fast. There are the objects of taking the vessels in the Sorel and General Carleton. These objects I pass by to assist the army besieging St. John’s. If that place be taken, the country is ours ; if we miscarry in this, all other achievements will profit but little. I am fearful our army will be sickly, and that the siege may be hard ; therefore I choose to assist in conquering St. John’s. You may rely on it, that I shall join you in about three days with five hundred or more Canadian volunteers. I could raise one or two thousand in a week’s time, but I will first visit the army with a less number, and, if necessary, go again recruiting. It is with the advice of the officers with me, that I speedily repair to the army. God grant you wisdom and fortitude and every accomplishment of a victorious general.”

Unluckily these anticipations were blighted in their bloom. In an evil hour Colonel Allen was induced to change his judicious determination of joining General Montgomery without delay, and to give ear to a project, which proved the ruin of his bright hopes, and led him into a fatal snare. He had marched up the eastern bank of the St. Lawrence as far as Longueuil, nearly opposite to Montreal, and was pressing on towards

St. John's, according to the tenor of his letter. Between Longueil and Laprairie he fell in with Major Brown, who was at the head of an advanced party of Americans and Canadians. Brown requested him to stop, took him aside, and proposed to unite their forces in an attack on Montreal, representing the defenceless condition of the town, and the ease with which it might be taken by surprise. Relying on the knowledge and fidelity of Brown, and ever ready to pursue adventures and court danger, Colonel Allen assented to the proposal, and the plan was matured on the spot. Allen was to return to Longueil, procure canoes, and pass over with his party in the night a little below Montreal; and Brown at the same time was to cross above the town, with about two hundred men, and the attack was to be made simultaneously at opposite points.

True to his engagement, Allen crossed the river on the night of the 24th of September, with eighty Canadians and thirty Americans, and landed them undiscovered before daylight, although the canoes were so few and small, that it was necessary to pass back and forth three times in conveying over the whole party. The wind was high and the waves rough, which added to the peril of an adventure sufficiently hazardous in itself. The day dawned, and Colonel Allen waited with impatience for the signal of Major

Brown's division having landed above the town. He set guards in the road to stop all persons that were passing, and thus prevent intelligence of his approach from being carried into Montreal. When the morning was considerably advanced and no signal had been given, it was evident that Major Brown had not crossed the river. Colonel Allen would willingly have retreated, but it was now too late. The canoes would hold only one third of his party. A person detained by his guard had escaped and gone into the town, and presently armed men were seen coming out. He posted his men in the best manner he could, and prepared to maintain his ground. About forty British regulars, two or three hundred Canadians, and a few Indians, constituted the assailing force. The skirmish continued an hour and three quarters, when Colonel Allen agreed to surrender to the principal British officer, upon being promised honorable terms. His men had all deserted him in the conflict, except thirty-eight, who were included in his capitulation. Seven of these were wounded. They were treated civilly by the officers while marching into Montreal, and till they were delivered over to General Prescott, whose conduct is described as having been peculiarly harsh, and in all respects unworthy of an officer of his rank. His language was coarse and his manner unfeeling. After conversing with his pris-

oner, and asking him if he was the same Colonel Allen, who had taken Ticonderoga, he burst into a passion, threatened him with a halter at Tyburn, and ordered him to be bound hand and foot in irons on board the Gaspee schooner of war. In this situation Colonel Allen wrote the following letter to General Prescott.

“HONORABLE SIR,

“In the wheel of transitory events I find myself a prisoner and in irons. Probably your Honor has certain reasons to me inconceivable, though I challenge an instance of this sort of economy of the Americans during the late war towards any officers of the Crown. On my part, I have to assure your Honor, that when I had the command and took Captain Delaplace and Lieutenant Felton, with the garrison at Ticonderoga, I treated them with every mark of friendship and generosity, the evidence of which is notorious even in Canada. I have only to add, that I expect an honorable and humane treatment, as an officer of my rank and merit should have, and subscribe myself your Honor’s most obedient humble servant.

“ETHAN ALLEN.” \*

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\* The account of the capture of Ticonderoga, which has been given above, and of the subsequent events of

No answer to this letter was returned. Colonel Allen's irons were massive, and so fastened as to give him constant pain. He was handcuffed, and his ankles were confined in shackles, to which was attached a bar of iron eight feet long. In this plight he was thrust into the lowest part of the ship, where he had neither a bed nor any article of furniture, except a chest, on which by the favor of some humane sailor he was allowed to sit, or lie on his back, the only recumbent posture that his irons would suffer him to assume. His companions in arms, who capitulated on the same terms as their leader, were fastened together in pairs with handcuffs and chains.

For more than five weeks the prisoners were kept in this manner on board the *Gaspee*, treated as criminals, and subject to every indignity from the officers, and from persons who came to see them out of curiosity. After the repulse of Governor Carleton at Longueil, by Warner and his brave Green Mountain Boys, the state of affairs in Montreal began to put on a more doubtful aspect. It was deemed advisable to send off the prisoners,

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Colonel Allen's life till he was taken prisoner, has been drawn entirely from original manuscripts, in the public offices of Massachusetts and New York, and among General Washington's papers. The particulars respecting his captivity are chiefly gathered from his own "*Narrative*," written and published shortly after his release.

that there might be no danger of a rescue, in case of the sudden approach of General Montgomery's army, which might be daily expected.

In a short time Colonel Allen found himself at Quebec, where he was transferred to another vessel, and then to a third, a change most favorable to his health and comfort. Captain Littlejohn, the commander of the last vessel, was particularly civil, generous, and friendly, ordering his irons to be knocked off, taking him to his own table, and declaring that no brave man should be ill used on board his ship. Unhappily this respite from suffering was of short continuance. Arnold appeared at Point Levi, on the 9th of November, with an armed force, descending from the forests like an apparition of enchantment in some fairy tale. The news of the surrender of St. John's and the capitulation of Montreal to General Montgomery came soon afterwards. These events were looked upon as the harbinger of greater disasters, in the downfall of Quebec, and the conquest of the whole province. In anticipation of the fate of St. John's and Montreal, a vessel of war, called the *Adamant*, had been got in readiness to carry despatches to the government. The prisoners were put on board this vessel, and consigned to the charge of Brook Watson, a merchant of Montreal. Several other loyalists were passengers, and among them Guy Johnson.

Under his new master, Colonel Allen soon discovered, that he was not to expect the urbanity and kindness of Captain Littlejohn. His handcuffs were replaced, and he and thirty-three other prisoners, manacled in the same manner, were confined together in a single apartment, enclosed with oak plank, which they were not suffered to leave during the whole passage of nearly forty days. Where there is so much to censure in the hardened insensibility, which could inflict sufferings like these on prisoners, whose only crime was their bravery, it should be mentioned as one softening feature, that as much provision was served to them as they wanted, and a gill of rum a day to each man; so that the negative merit of not adding starvation to confinement, insults, and chains, should be allowed to have its full weight. The name of Brook Watson had already become notorious. Three or four months previously to his sailing for England, he had been at New York and Philadelphia, visited many persons of distinction, especially members of the Continental Congress, and conducted himself in such a manner as to leave the impression, that he was a warm friend to the American cause. Immediately after his return to Montreal, letters written by him to persons in General Gage's army at Boston were intercepted, which proved him to have deserved the character rather of a spy than a friend. He had

art, insincerity, and talent. He was the same Brook Watson, who was afterwards Lord Mayor of London.

It was a joyful day for the prisoners when the Adamant entered the harbor of Falmouth. Their long and close confinement had become extremely irksome and painful. They were now brought on deck, and permitted to breathe the fresh air, and were cheered with the light of day. In a short time they were landed, and marched to Pendennis Castle, about a mile from the town. Great crowds were attracted to witness so novel a sight; and if all the prisoners were habited in the costume of Colonel Allen, it is no wonder that their curiosity was excited. While he was on his recruiting tour he had clothed himself in a Canadian dress, consisting of a short, fawn-skin, double-breasted jacket, a vest and breeches of sagathy, worsted stockings, shoes, a plain shirt, and a red worsted cap. In this garb he was taken; and, as it had never been changed during his captivity, he was exhibited in it to the gazing multitudes of Falmouth. Robinson Crusoe on his island could hardly have presented a more grotesque appearance. The people stared, but no insult was offered to the prisoners on their way to the castle.

In this new abode they found their condition much improved, being lodged in an airy room, and indulged with the luxury of bunks and straw



Their irons were still kept on, but they were kindly treated, and furnished with fresh and wholesome provisions. Colonel Allen was particularly favored by the commandant of the castle, who sent him a breakfast and dinner every day from his own table, and now and then a bottle of wine. Another benevolent gentleman supplied his board with suppers, and in the article of good living his star of fortune had probably never been more propitious. The renown of his adventure at Ticonderoga had gone before him; and as that fortress had a notoriety in England, on account of its importance in former wars, the man who had conquered it was looked upon as no common person, though now in chains and stigmatized with the name of rebel. He was permitted to walk on the parade-ground within the walls of the castle, where many respectable people from the neighborhood paid him a visit, and conversed with him on various topics. His bold and independent manner, fluency of language, and strong native talent, contrasted with the singularity of his appearance, in his Canadian dress and handcuffs, awakened the surprise and contributed to the amusement of his auditors. Though in bondage, and completely at the mercy of his enemies, he was eloquent on the theme of patriotism, boasted the courage and firmness of his countrymen, and pledged himself that they would never

cease to resist oppression, till their just claims were allowed, and their liberty secured. These political harangues, if they had no other effect, served to lighten the weight of his chains, and to give a seeming impulse to the leaden wings of time.

Notwithstanding the comparative amelioration of his circumstances, Colonel Allen's mind was not perfectly at ease in regard to the future. General Prescott's hint about his gracing a halter at Tyburn rested upon his thoughts, and gave him some uneasiness amidst the uncertain prospects now before him. But despondency and fear made no part of his character, and, even when hope failed, his fortitude was triumphant. Prepared for the worst that might happen, he bethought himself of trying the effect of a stratagem. He asked permission to write a letter to the Continental Congress, which was granted. He depicted in vivid colors the treatment he had received from the beginning of his captivity, but advised the Congress not to retaliate, till the fate that awaited him in England should be known, and then to execute the law of retaliation not in proportion to the small influence of his character in America, but to the extent demanded by the importance of the cause for which he had suffered. The despatch was finished, and handed over for inspection to the officer, who had permitted him to write. This

officer went to him the next day, and reprimanded him for what he called the impudence of inditing such an epistle. "Do you think we are fools in England," said he, "and would send your letter to Congress with instructions to retaliate on our own people? I have sent your letter to Lord North." This was precisely the destination for which the writer intended it, and he felt a secret satisfaction that his artifice had succeeded. He wished the ministry to know his situation and his past sufferings, and to reflect, that his countrymen had it in their power to retaliate in full measure any acts of violence meditated against his person. A letter on these subjects, written directly to a minister by a prisoner in irons, would not have been forwarded.

Whatever ideas the ministry may have entertained when the prisoners were landed, it was soon perceived that lenient measures were the most advisable. The opposition made a handle of an act so outrageous, as that of treating as malefactors and chaining men, who had been taken bravely fighting in a cause, for which a whole continent was in arms; and it was now too late to talk of hanging the revolted colonists on the plea of rebellion. Moreover it was known, that St. John's and Montreal had surrendered to Montgomery, and that the very officers, who had captured these men and sent them to England, were in the hands

of the Americans. It was furthermore rumored, that certain gentlemen had resolved to try the effect of the *Habeas Corpus* act in setting the prisoners at liberty, or at least in bringing them to a trial before a proper magistrate, to ascertain whether they were legally guilty of any offence, which justified their confinement. To silence popular clamor, and prevent rash consequences, the government determined to regard them as prisoners of war, and to send them back to America. For this purpose they were ordered on board the Solebay frigate, where their irons were taken off, after they had worn them about three months and a half.

Just at this time the grand armament was preparing to sail from Ireland, under Sir Peter Parker and Lord Cornwallis, with troops to act against North Carolina, according to a plan formed by the ministry in consequence of the representations of Governor Martin, that a numerous body of loyalists was ready to take up arms in that colony, as soon as they should be encouraged by the coöperation of a sufficient force from Great Britain. The troops were to be put on board in the harbor of Cork, where the vessels destined for the expedition rendezvoused, and among them the Solebay frigate. From the captain of this ship Colonel Allen had early proofs, that the prisoners were to expect neither lenity nor civil treatment. His

first salutation was to order them in an imperious tone to leave the deck, and never appear there again, adding that the deck was the "place for gentlemen to walk." Allen was conducted down to the cable-tier, where he was left to accommodate himself as well as he could. Being ill of a cold, and his health much impaired by his late sufferings, the natural buoyancy of his spirits failed him in this comfortless abode, and he felt himself, as he has expressed it, "in an evil case," imagining his enemies to have devised this scheme of effecting, by a slow and clandestine process, what it was impolitic for them to do in the open face of day with the eyes of the public upon them.

His despondency, however, gradually wore off, and, two days afterwards, wanting fresh air and exercise, he resolved to try the experiment of appearing on deck, having washed, shaved, and adjusted his dress in the best manner his scanty wardrobe would allow. The captain saw him, and demanded in an angry voice, if he had not been ordered not to come on deck. Colonel Allen replied, that he had heard such an order from him, but at the same time he had said, "the deck was the place for gentlemen to walk," and, as he was Colonel Allen and a gentleman, he claimed the privilege of his rank. Whether influenced by this kind of logic, or by some other reason, the captain contented himself with utter-

ng an oath, and cautioning the prisoner never to be seen on the same side of the ship with him. There was encouragement even in this harsh greeting, since it did not amount to an absolute prohibition ; and, by taking care to keep at a proper distance from the captain, he was afterwards permitted to walk the deck, though sometimes capriciously and rudely ordered off. His condition below was somewhat amended by the generosity of the master-at-arms, an Irishman, who offered him a place in a little berth fitted up for himself with canvass between the decks, in which he was kindly allowed by the occupant to remain till the ship arrived in America.

When it was known at Cork, that Colonel Allen and his fellow-prisoners were in the harbor on board the *Solebay*, several gentlemen of that city determined to convey to them substantial evidences of their sympathy. A full suit of clothes was sent to each of the privates ; and Colonel Allen's wardrobe was replenished with fine broadcloth sufficient for two suits, eight shirts and stocks ready made, several pairs of silk and worsted hose, shoes, and two beaver hats, one of which was richly adorned with gold lace. Nor did the bounty of the philanthropists of Cork end here. Although they had clothed the naked, they did not consider the work of benevolence finished till they had fed the hungry. A

profuse supply of sea-stores came on board for Colonel Allen, consisting of sugar, coffee, tea, chocolate, pickled beef, fat turkeys, wines, old spirits, and other articles suited for a voyage. Each of the privates also received tea and sugar. Added to this, a gentleman visited Colonel Allen, in behalf of the donors, and offered him fifty guineas, which, after the other tokens of their munificence, he declined to accept, retaining only seven guineas as a relief in case of pressing necessity.

The above articles were admitted on board by the second lieutenant, while his superiors were on shore; but when the captain returned and was informed what had been done, he was angry, and swore that "the American rebels should not be feasted at this rate by the rebels of Ireland." He took away all the liquors, except a small quantity, which was secreted by the connivance of the second lieutenant, and he appropriated to the use of the crew all the tea and sugar, that had been given to the privates. The clothing they were permitted to keep.

The fleet put to sea from Cork on the 13th of February, consisting of forty-three sail, with about two thousand five hundred troops. The weather was fine, and the effect was beautiful as the ships sailed out of the harbor; but they had been at sea only five days, when a terrible storm

arose, which raged with unabated violence for twenty-four hours, dispersed the fleet, and shattered several of the transports so much, that they were obliged to put back to Cork and the southern ports of England. The Solebay received no essential injury, and she proceeded on her voyage. Before they left Cork the prisoners were divided and assigned to three different ships. This gave their leader some uneasiness, for they had been brave, and true to the cause in which they suffered, and had borne all their calamities with a becoming fortitude. It turned out, however, that they were better treated on board the other ships, than they had been while with him. The only incident worthy of being commemorated, which happened to Colonel Allen during the voyage, was the change of his Canadian costume for one fabricated from the superfine broadcloths received in Cork. This metamorphosis was effected by the aid of the captain's tailor, whose services were granted on this occasion as a special favor. Clad in his new suit with his silk stockings and laced hat, the prisoner made a more respectable figure on deck, and enjoyed privileges, which at first had been denied.

It was with some regret, therefore, that, after his arrival at Cape Fear River, in North Carolina, he found himself transferred to the Mercury frigate, the captain of which he describes as



tyrannical, narrow-minded, and destitute of the common feelings of humanity. The only consolation in this change of circumstances was, that his original companions in captivity were brought together again on board this ship, except one who had died on the passage from Ireland, and another who had escaped by an extraordinary exertion of swimming, after the fleet arrived on the coast, and who safely reached his home in New England. The captain ordered the purser not to let the prisoners have any thing from his store, and forbade the surgeon's attending them in sickness. Every night they were shut down in the cable-tier, and indeed they passed a miserable existence both day and night, being told, when they complained of such treatment, that it was a matter of little consequence, as they would be hanged when they arrived in Halifax.

The Mercury sailed from Cape Fear River on the 20th of May, and touched at the Hook off New York the first week in June. At this time General Washington with the American army had possession of New York, and the British shipping lay in the outer harbor near the Hook. The Mercury remained here three days, during which time Governor Tryon, and Mr. Kemp, the attorney-general of New York under the old government, came on board. Tryon eyed Allen, as they were walking on different parts of the

deck, but did not speak to him. It is natural to presume, that the late governor saw with a secret satisfaction the man in safe custody, who had caused him so much unavailing trouble in writing proclamations. Kemp was the same attorney, whom Allen had met at Albany, when he attended the court there as agent for the patentees of the New Hampshire Grants. No man had been more active in pressing the New York claims, or in stirring up persecutions against the Green Mountain Boys; and of course no one had acquired among them a more odious notoriety. This accidental meeting with Ethan Allen must have called up peculiar associations in the minds of both the governor and the attorney-general.

The Mercury arrived in Halifax after a short passage from New York. The prisoners were put into a sloop, then lying in the harbor, and a guard watched them day and night. In this confinement they were served with so scanty an allowance of provisions, that they suffered cruelly from the distress of hunger, which, added to attacks of the scurvy, made their condition more deplorable than it had been at any former time. They were still under the direction of the captain of the Mercury, to whom they wrote letter after letter, imploring medical aid and other assistance, but in vain. The captain was deaf to their calls,

took no notice of their complaints, and, to get rid of their importunities, he ordered the guards to bring him no more letters. Their case seemed now reduced to the verge of despair. Allen resolved, however, to make one more effort. He wrought so far upon the compassion of one of the guards, as to persuade him to take a letter directed to Governor Arbutnot, which was faithfully communicated. Touched with the claims of humanity, the governor immediately sent a surgeon to the prisoners, with instructions to administer such relief to the sick as was necessary, and also an officer, to ascertain and report the grounds of their complaint. This officer discharged his duty well, and the result was, that the next day they were removed from their dismal quarters on board the prison-sloop to the jail in Halifax.

To seek the asylum of a jail is not a usual experiment for attaining happiness. In the present instance, however, it was a fortunate one for the sufferers, inasmuch as it was the means of relieving them from the pains of hunger, and procuring for them the attendance of a physician. In other respects their condition was little amended, since more than thirty persons were shut up in one room, several of them in various stages of sickness, with hardly a single accommodation, that could in any manner contribute to their comfort or convenience. Some of Allen's fellow-prisoners

had been sent to the hospital, and others employed in the public works, so that only thirteen of those taken in Canada now remained with him.

Among the American prisoners, whom Allen met in Halifax jail, was Mr. James Lovell of Boston, a gentleman eminent for his learning and character, who, after his release, was many years a member of the Continental Congress. His zeal in the cause of his country, and frankness in avowing his sentiments, had made him an object of suspicion and odium to the British commander in Boston, where he was first imprisoned ; and, when that city was evacuated, he was carried into captivity, and locked up in the jail of Halifax in the same apartment with prisoners of the lowest class.

There were now together four American officers, besides Mr. Lovell, who, by the custom of war and the practice then existing in regard to British prisoners taken by the Americans, had a right to their parole ; but this was never granted. They were kept in close confinement till orders came from General Howe to send them to New York. Partial negotiations had commenced between General Washington and General Howe for the exchange of prisoners, and certain principles had been laid down, by the mutual agreement of the parties, as a basis upon which to proceed. Moreover Congress had instructed General Washington to make a special application in

favor of Mr. Lovell and Colonel Allen, proposing to exchange Governor Skene for the former, and an officer of equal rank for the latter. The legislature of Connecticut had also interfered in behalf of Allen, and eighteen of the prisoners taken with him, who were natives of that State, and solicited Congress and the Commander-in-chief to use all practicable means for effecting their release. The same had been done by the Massachusetts legislature in the case of Mr. Lovell.

After the intelligence of Allen's being in Halifax reached his friends, a project was formed by his brother, Levi Allen, to visit him there and attempt to procure his liberty. The State of Connecticut voted money to pay the expense of this enterprise, but the arrival of the prisoners in New York rendered it unnecessary.

The Lark frigate, on board of which were Mr. Lovell, Colonel Allen, and their companions, sailed from Halifax about the middle of October. Luckily they found themselves at last under an officer, Captain Smith, who treated them with the politeness of a gentleman, and with the feelings of a man capable of sympathizing in the distresses of the unfortunate. The first interview is thus described by Colonel Allen. "When I came on deck, he met me with his hand, welcomed me to his ship, invited me to dine with

him that day, and assured me that I should be treated as a gentleman, and that he had given orders that I should be treated with respect by the ship's crew. This was so unexpected and sudden a transition, that it drew tears from my eyes, which all the ill usages I had before met with were not able to produce; nor could I at first hardly speak, but soon recovered myself, and expressed my gratitude for so unexpected a favor, and let him know, that I felt anxiety of mind in reflecting, that his situation and mine was such, that it was not probable it would ever be in my power to return the favor. Captain Smith replied, that he had no reward in view, but only treated me as a gentleman ought to be treated. He said, this is a mutable world, and one gentleman never knows but it may be in his power to help another."

An opportunity soon occurred of verifying this last remark. They had not been at sea many days, when it was discovered that a conspiracy was on foot to destroy the captain and the principal officers, and seize the ship. An American captain, who had commanded an armed vessel, and been recently taken prisoner, was the chief conspirator. He revealed his designs to Colonel Allen and Mr. Lovell, requesting their coöperation in bringing over the other prisoners, about thirty in number, and telling them that several of

the crew were ready to join in the plot. It was known that there were thirty-five thousand pounds in money on board, and the plan of the conspirators was to take the ship into an American port, where they expected to divide the booty according to the usual rules of captures. Without waiting to discuss the laws of war, or to reason about the infamy and criminality of such an act with men, who were prepared to execute it, Colonel Allen declared with his usual decision and vehemence, that he would not listen a moment to such a scheme, that, in its mildest character, it was a base and wicked return for the kind treatment they had received, and that he would at every personal hazard defend Captain Smith's life. This rebuff was unexpected by the conspirators, and it threw them into a distressing dilemma, since the fear of detection was now as appalling to them as the danger of their original enterprise. They then requested him to remain neutral, and let them proceed in their own way, but this he peremptorily refused ; and he finally succeeded in quelling the conspiracy, by adhering to his resolution, and promising, that, as he had been consulted in confidence, he would not divulge the matter, if the leaders would pledge themselves instantly to abandon the design. In the present state of things they were glad to accept such terms. At the conclusion of this affair Colonel Allen was forcibly reminded of the words of Captain Smith.

Before the end of October the Lark frigate anchored in the harbor of New York, and the prisoners were removed to the Glasgow transport. Mr. Lovell was exchanged in a few days for Governor Skene ; and Colonel Allen, after remaining four or five weeks in the transport, where he met with very civil usage, was landed in New York and admitted to his parole. Here he had an opportunity of witnessing the wretched condition and extreme sufferings of the American prisoners, who had been taken in the battle on Long Island and at Fort Washington, and who were left to perish of hunger, cold, and sickness in the churches of New York. He speaks of these scenes as the most painful and revolting, that could be conceived. Indeed numerous concurring testimonies have established it as a fact, of which not a shadow of doubt can now be entertained, that human misery has seldom been seen in such heart-rending forms or under circumstances so aggravating. The motives of the enemy for practising or permitting cruelties so little consonant to the dictates of humanity, the customs of civilized warfare, and every principle of sound policy, are not a fit theme of inquiry in this narrative. The fact itself is an indelible stain, deep and dark, in the character of Sir William Howe, which no array of private virtues, of military talents, or public acts, will hide or obscure. The picture drawn by Allen, colored as it may be



by the ardor of his feelings, is vivid and impressive, and its accuracy is confirmed by the declarations of several other persons, who also related what they saw.

While he was on his parole in New York, a British officer of rank and importance sent for him to his lodgings and told him that his fidelity, though in a wrong cause, had made an impression upon General Howe, who was disposed to show him a favor, and to advance him to the command of a regiment of loyalists, if he would join the service, holding out to him at the same time brilliant prospects of promotion and money during the war, and large tracts of land at its close. Allen replied, "that if by faithfulness he had recommended himself to General Howe, he should be loth by unfaithfulness to lose the general's good opinion ;" and as to the lands, he was by no means satisfied, that the King would possess a sufficient quantity in the United States at the end of the war to redeem any pledges on that score. The officer sent him away as an incorrigible and hopeless subject.

In the month of January, 1777, he was directed with other prisoners to take up his abode on the western side of Long Island, being still on parole, and allowed the usual freedom under such circumstances within certain prescribed limits. Here he remained in a condition of comparative

comfort till August, when he was suddenly apprehended, environed with guards, conducted to the provost-jail in New York, and put into solitary confinement. This act was on the pretence of his having infringed his parole, which he affirmed was untrue, and the whole proceeding unjust and malicious. But the cause was now of little moment, since he was chiefly concerned with the effect. For the space of three days he was immured in his cell without a morsel of food. The sergeant, who stood at the door, refused to be moved by offers of money or appeals to his compassion, and repelled every advance with a soldier's oath and the brief reply, that he would obey his orders. The pains of hunger became extreme, but they were at last assuaged; and in a few days he was transferred to another apartment of the jail, where he found himself in company with more than twenty American officers.

From this place he was not removed till the end of his captivity. After being shut up for more than eight months in the provost-jail, a confinement of which the prisoners were ever accustomed to speak with disgust and horror, the day of liberty dawned upon him.

Neither his countrymen generally, nor the supreme council of the nation, had at any time lost sight of his sufferings, or ceased to express their sympathy. Congress had on several occasions

proposed his exchange ; but it was prevented after his arrival in New York by the difficulties, which embarrassed and defeated all attempts for effecting a general cartel between Washington and Howe. It was finally agreed, that he should be exchanged for Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell ; and on the 3d of May, 1778, he was taken from prison and conducted under guard to a sloop in the harbor, and thence to Staten Island. Here he was politely received by the British commander, and kindly treated for two days, when Colonel Campbell arrived from Elizabethtown, under the charge of Mr. Elias Boudinot, the American Commissary-General of prisoners. It may easily be conceived that the meeting was one of mutual congratulation and joy. The two released captives drank a glass of wine together in celebration of the event, and Colonel Allen returned immediately with Mr. Boudinot to Elizabethtown.

His feelings, on once more touching the soil and breathing the air of freedom, will be left to the imagination of the reader. He was now restored to his country, the object of a patriotic devotion, that neither the cruelty nor the enticements of the enemy could diminish ; in whose cause he had suffered a captivity of two years and seven months, under all the rigor of chains, hunger, and harsh usage. Insensibility made no part of his nature, and the soul must be callous

indeed, that would not thrill with emotion at the recollections of the past, the realities of the present, and the visions of the future, that now thronged upon his mind.

Notwithstanding the strong associations and tender ties, which drew him towards his home and friends, the impulse of gratitude was the first he obeyed. The lively interest taken in his condition by the Commander-in-chief, and his efforts to procure his release, were known to him, and he resolved to repair without delay to head-quarters, and express in person his sense of the obligation. The army was at Valley Forge, and as he advanced into the country on his way to that place, he was everywhere greeted by the people with demonstrations of strong interest, not unmixed with curiosity at seeing a man, the incidents of whose life had given him renown, and whose fate while in the hands of the enemy had been a subject of public concern. General Washington received him cordially, and introduced him to the principal officers in camp, who showed him many civilities.

Having thus discharged a duty, which he believed to be demanded by justice and gratitude as the first fruit of his liberty, and having remained a few days only at Valley Forge, he turned his face towards the Green Mountains, and hastened to join his family and former associates. From

Valley Forge to Fishkill he travelled in company with General Gates, who was proceeding to take command of the army on the North River. In the evening of the last day of May, Colonel Allen arrived in Bennington, unexpected at that time by his friends, and a general sensation was immediately spread throughout the neighborhood. The people gathered around him, and, with a delight which could be realized only under circumstances so peculiar, he witnessed the joy that beamed from every countenance, and heard the accents of a hearty welcome uttered by every voice. It was a season of festivity with the Green Mountain Boys, and the same evening three cannon were fired, as an audible expression of their gladness. Nor did the scene of hilarity end with that day. The next morning Colonel Herrick, who had distinguished himself by his bravery under the veteran Stark in the battle of Bennington, ordered fourteen discharges of cannon, "thirteen for the United States and one for young Vermont," as a renewed and more ample compliment to the early champion and faithful associate of the Green Mountain Boys.

Congress was equally mindful of the services and of the just claims of Colonel Allen. As soon as he was released from captivity, they granted him a brevet commission of colonel in the Continental army, "in reward of his fortitude, firmness,

and zeal in the cause of his country, manifested during the course of his long and cruel captivity, as well as on former occasions." It was moreover resolved, that he should be entitled, during the time he was a prisoner, to all the benefits and privileges of a lieutenant-colonel in the service of the United States. That is, he was to receive the pay and other emoluments of that rank. As the brevet commission of colonel did not entitle him to pay, he was allowed seventy-five dollars a month from the date of that commission, till he should be called into actual service. How long this allowance was continued, I have no means of ascertaining. It does not appear, that he ever joined the Continental army. From the above proofs, however, it is evident, that the proceedings of Congress in regard to him were generous and honorable, manifesting at the same time a proper sense of his past sufferings, and respect for his character.

During his absence, important changes had taken place in the affairs of the New Hampshire Grants. The inhabitants had made a gradual progress in maturing and establishing a new form of government, having declared their territory an independent State, under the name of *Vermont*, framed and adopted a new constitution, and organized the various branches of government by the election of a governor and other civil

officers. In effecting these objects they had encountered numerous obstacles; both from the internal distractions caused by the invasion of Burgoyne's army, and from the machinations and adverse influence of external foes. The embers of the old feud with New York were stirred up afresh, when the people of Vermont presumed to talk of independence and a separation from that State. Governor Clinton, and several other prominent individuals in New York, had been warmly enlisted at an early day against the pretensions of the Green Mountain Boys; and although they were far from abetting or vindicating the rash measures of the colonial administration, yet they were strenuous in asserting the supremacy of New York over the whole territory as far as Connecticut River, and in demanding from the people an obedience to the laws of that State. Hence it followed, that the controversy was only narrowed in its extent, but not at all changed in its principles.

Ethan Allen arrived just in time to buckle on his armor, and enter with renovated vigor into a contest, in which he had been so conspicuous and successful a combatant from its very beginning, and with all the tactics of which he was perfectly familiar. Governor Clinton, by the authority of the New York Legislature, had recently sent out a proclamation, reprobating and

annulling the bloody statute heretofore mentioned, acknowledging that attempts contrary to justice and policy had been made to dispossess the original patentees of their lands, and putting forth certain overtures for a reconciliation of differences, but taking care to assert the absolute power of New York over the persons and property of such, as did not choose to accept these proposals. According to the tenor of these overtures, the patents of the governor of New Hampshire were all to be confirmed, but a continuance of the quit-rents was claimed from the purchasers, as under the colonial system, and the unsettled lands were reserved as the property of the State.

The grand feature of the proclamation was the assumption of supremacy, and this was the point most essential to the people of Vermont, since it struck at the root of their political existence. The overtures were dressed up in such a manner, as to have a plausible appearance, and to be likely to lead astray those persons, who thought less of preserving their political rights, than of the immediate security of their possessions. The more wise and wary, however, took the alarm, and among these was Ethan Allen. He saw a fatal danger lurking beneath a show of proffered indulgences and fair professions. The cautious Trojan distrusted the Greeks even in their acts of apparent generosity; and the leader of the



Green Mountain Boys looked with an eye of equal suspicion on the spontaneous advances of the New Yorkers. In short, every proposal, come from what quarter it might, which did not imply the entire independence of Vermont as a separate State and government, was in his view to be disdained and repelled.

In this spirit he wrote an address to the inhabitants of Vermont, stating briefly the grounds of their claims to the privilege of self-government, and exhorting them not to relax for a moment in their efforts to attain the end for which they had struggled so long and so hard. A large part of his address was taken up in animadverting on Governor Clinton's proclamation, in which, as with a good deal of ingenuity and force he made it appear, the overtures of New York held out to them nothing which they did not already possess, and would deprive them of the dearest of earthly treasures, their liberty. His arguments and his mode of stating them were suited to the people, whom he addressed, and without doubt produced the desired effect of confirming their confidence in themselves, and inciting them to union and perseverance.

Sometimes he touches on personal incidents. Alluding to the bloody act of proscription, which had been passed under Governor Tryon, he observes ; " In the lifetime of that act I was called

by the Yorkers an outlaw ; and afterwards by the British I was called a rebel ; and I humbly conceive, that there was as much propriety in the one name as the other ; and I verily believe, that the King's commissioners would now be as willing to pardon me for the sin of rebellion, provided I would afterwards be subject to Britain, as the legislature above mentioned, provided I would be subject to New York ; and I must confess I had as lief be a subject of the one as the other, and it is well known I have had great experience with them both."

In his concluding remarks on the overtures in the proclamation he says, still addressing himself to the people ; " The main inducement I had in answering them was, to draw a full and convincing proof from the same, that the shortest, best, and most eligible, I had almost said the only possible way of vacating those New York interfering grants, is to maintain inviolable the supremacy of the legislative authority of the independent State of Vermont. This, at one stroke, overturns every New York scheme, which may be calculated for our ruin, makes us freemen, confirms our property, and puts it fairly in our power to help ourselves in the enjoyment of the great blessings of a free, uncorrupted, and virtuous civil government. You have fought, bled, and hitherto conquered, and are as deserving of these

good fruits of your valor, hazard, and toil, as any people under heaven.

“ You have experienced every species of oppression, which the old government of New York, with a Tryon at their head, could invent and inflict ; and it is manifest, that the new government are minded to follow in their steps. Happy is it for you, that you are fitted for the severest trials. You have been wonderfully supported and carried through thus far in your opposition to that government. Formerly you had every thing to fear from it ; but now, you have little to fear, for your public character is established, and your cause known to be just. In your early struggles with that government you acquired a reputation of bravery ; this gave you a relish for martial glory, and the British invasion opened an ample field for its display, and you have gone on conquering and to conquer until tall grenadiers are dismayed and tremble at your approach. Your frontier-situation often obliges you to be in arms and battles ; and by repeated marching, scoutings, and manly exercises, your nerves have become strong to strike the mortal blow. What enemy of the State of Vermont, or what New York land-monopolizer, shall be able to stand before you in the day of your fierce anger ! ”

By harangues like this, abounding more in strong and pointed expressions, than in good taste

or a graceful diction, he wrought upon the minds of the people, and inclined them to his wishes. But it should be said to his praise, considering the scenes he passed through, that on no occasion did he encourage or countenance laxness in government, or disobedience to the laws and magistrates, recognised as such by the people themselves. "Any one," he remarks, "who is acquainted with mankind and things, must know, that it is impossible to manage the political matters of this country without the assistance of civil government. A large body of people destitute of it, is like a ship at sea, without a helm or mariner, tossed by impetuous waves. We could not enjoy domestic peace and security, set aside the consequences of a British war and the New York strife, without civil regulations. The two last considerations do, in the most striking manner, excite us to strengthen and confirm the government already set up by the authority of the people, which is the fountain of all temporal power, and from which the subjects of the State of Vermont have already received such signal advantages." These sentiments he avowed repeatedly, and even when he was stirring up and leading out the mobs of Bennington, he always declared it was in self-defence, the result of a necessity forced upon them by their enemies; and he never ceased to recommend order, good faith, and submission to the laws, as es-

sential to the prosperity and happiness of the community.

We here discover, in fact, the explanation of the successful progress of the people in rearing up a political fabric, which became solid and durable, although for several years they were apparently in a state of confusion, if not of anarchy. But this was more in appearance than reality. There were no internal broils or commotions, that in any degree disturbed the general order of society. United in one great object of resisting a common foe, and impelled by the same interests and aims, they had few motives for dissensions among themselves; and this union not only pointed out the necessity of rules of government, but afforded opportunities to frame and adopt them in such a manner, that they were acceptable and efficient. The inhabitants of the Grants were mostly natives of the New England colonies, and possessed a similarity in their sentiments and habits, which enabled them to harmonize the more easily in regulating public concerns.

Committees of safety and conventions were the contrivances to which they resorted, for setting in motion and sustaining the machinery of government. These were organized on the strictest republican principles, being created and constituted by the people themselves, acting at first voluntarily in their individual capacity, and agree-

ing to be controlled by the voice of a majority. Upon this basis the committees were intrusted with all the power requisite to form regulations for local purposes. The conventions attained the same objects in a broader sphere, and with higher authority. The system was peculiarly felicitous in being adapted to communities of every description, and to small numbers as well as large. Its principles were likewise the elements of the best constructed governments; and hence the people were gradually trained up in the art of self-control, and qualified to assume and maintain the character of an independent State, even while embarrassed by the hostility and interference of the neighboring powers. It is remarkable, that the plan of conventions and committees, which was adopted by all the States at the beginning of the Revolution, had previously been eight years in practice among the first settlers of Vermont.

Considering the part, which Ethan Allen had acted before his captivity, and the consistency of his conduct, it was to be expected, that he would embark with his accustomed zeal in a cause, which had now acquired a new importance, and especially as it was still involved in the old quarrel with New York. As his countrymen had not forgotten the military rank to which they raised him in the season of their former perils, nor the services he rendered at the head of the Green Moun-

tain Boys, and were disposed to profit again by his sword, as well as by his pen and his counsels, he was, soon after his return, appointed general and commander of the militia of the State. A stronger proof of confidence could not have been shown, more particularly at this time, when an invasion of the British from Canada might at any moment be apprehended, and when the delicate relations subsisting between Vermont and two adjoining States threatened an ultimate resort to arms as a possible consequence, either to quell internal factions, or to resist aggressions from abroad.

Meantime an incident occurred, which encumbered the affairs of Vermont with other difficulties. For certain political reasons, sixteen townships in the western parts of New Hampshire, bordering on Connecticut river, formed a combination to desert from that State and join themselves to Vermont. They sent a petition for that purpose to the Vermont legislature ; but it was at first no farther acted upon than to refer it to the people. At the next meeting of the legislature it was found, that a majority of the legal voters was in favor of admitting the sixteen townships. Hence a new enemy was raised up, and the field of discord enlarged. The governor of New Hampshire wrote a spirited protest to the governor of Vermont, claiming the sixteen townships

as a part of that State, and deprecating such an unwarrantable dismemberment. He wrote at the same time to the Continental Congress, demanding their interference in a matter of vital moment, not only to New Hampshire, but to every State in the Union, should such a disorganizing act be tolerated as a precedent.

The Vermont Assembly saw their error too late to retract it, since they had referred the subject to the people, and were bound to abide by their decision. To set the thing in as fair a light as it would bear, however, they appointed General Allen a special agent to proceed to Philadelphia, and explain to Congress this point and others requiring explanation, and endeavor as far as possible to ascertain the views of the members in regard to the independence of Vermont, and what was to be expected from the future deliberations of that body.

Furnished with proper instructions, General Allen repaired to Philadelphia, and applied himself to the duties of his mission. He soon discovered the undertaking to be surrounded with more difficulties, than he had anticipated. Distinct from the absolute merits of the case, there were in Congress party divisions, emanating from various sources, which prevented any union of action or sentiment on the subject of Vermont. The New England members were mostly in favor of granting



independence. This was not less the dictate of sound policy, than of the natural feelings of attachment to people closely allied to themselves and their constituents. Another State in the bosom of New England would of course strengthen the power and influence of the whole in the general scale. It was to be presumed, therefore, that the New England States would second the claims of Vermont; nor was this presumption weakened by any hereditary good will, that had formerly existed between those States and New York.

Unfortunately New Hampshire, for the reasons above stated, had been induced to deviate from the line of her neighbors, under the apprehension that her interests were in jeopardy. She was indeed meditating ambitious projects of her own, and forming a design to defeat the pretensions of Vermont, by extending her jurisdiction as far as Lake Champlain, and drawing the whole territory within her limits. She thus placed herself in rivalry with New York, in hostility to Vermont, and at variance with the other adjoining States.

Taking these considerations into view, and the known enmity of the New York members, General Allen's prospects of carrying back a satisfactory report to his friends were faint and discouraging. The southern delegates were indifferent, or only adhered to one side or the other as a

means of exerting a party influence. It is doubtless true, also, that several members were conscientiously opposed to any decision by Congress, believing the question not to come within the powers intrusted to that assembly. They argued, that the subject could not rightfully be brought before them in any shape, except in obedience to special instructions from the respective States. Others again denied the power of Congress to interfere at all, affirming that Vermont was in fact independent, and had a right to set up such a scheme of government as she chose. This was a short mode of settling the controversy, but it would hardly satisfy the scruples of New York, or the aspiring hopes of New Hampshire.

On his return from this mission, General Allen presented a report to the legislature of Vermont, containing the result of his observations, in which he gave it as his opinion, "that the New York complaints would never prove of sufficient force in Congress to prevent the establishment of the State of Vermont," and advised the legislature by all means to recede from the union with the sixteen townships, since it could never be approved by Congress without violating the articles of confederation, by which the rights and original extent of each State were guarantied. On this topic he spoke with decision and force.

In addition to the general objects of his mission,

the visit to Congress was not without advantage to himself and his constituents. It made him intimately acquainted with the views of the delegates in Congress, and with the arguments used by various individuals and parties. He ascertained likewise how far policy and individual bias on the one hand, and a regard for the absolute merits of the question on the other, operated in giving a complexion to the national councils.

This knowledge had an important influence on the future proceedings of Vermont. General Allen turned it to an immediate account, and he wrote a treatise vindicating the course hitherto pursued by Vermont, and maintaining the justice of her claim to set up such a form of government, as the people themselves should judge most conducive to their prosperity and happiness.\* Mr. Jay said of this book, in writing to a member of Congress when it first appeared, "There is quaintness, impudence, and art in it." He might have added, argument and the evidences of a good cause.

In these unwearied labors for the defence of the rights and dignity of the State, and in superintending its military affairs as commander of the

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\* The tract was entitled, *A Vindication of the Opposition of the Inhabitants of Vermont to the Government of New York, and of their Right to form an Independent State*. It was published in 1779, by order of the Governor and Council, or with their approbation.

militia, General Allen's time was fully employed. It was at this period, that the British generals in America began to meditate the scheme of bringing Vermont into a union with Canada, by taking advantage of the disputes, which had continued so long and waxed so warm, that it was supposed Vermont had become alienated from Congress and the opposing States, and would be ready to accept tempting overtures from the British. This idea received encouragement from the circumstance, that Congress afforded but a slender defence to the frontiers of Vermont, although the governor of Canada was in condition to make a descent with a force sufficient to bear down any opposition, that could be interposed by the whole strength of the State. The first step was to bring over some of the leaders ; and as Ethan Allen was the most conspicuous of these, and also the military chieftain, the attempt was made upon him. That his views might be ascertained on this subject, the following letter was written to him by Beverly Robinson, colonel of a regiment of loyal Americans, or, in other words, refugees adhering to the British cause and embodied in the British army.

New York, March 30th, 1780.

“ SIR,

“ I am now undertaking a task, which I hope you will receive with the same good intention, that

inclines me to make it. I have often been informed, that you and most of the inhabitants of Vermont are opposed to the wild and chimerical scheme of the Americans, in attempting to separate this continent from Great Britain, and to establish an independent State of their own ; and that you would willingly assist in uniting America again to Great Britain, and restoring that happy constitution we have so wantonly and unadvisedly destroyed. If I have been rightly informed, and these should be your sentiments and inclination, I beg you will communicate to me without reserve whatever proposals you would wish to make to the Commander-in-chief, and I here promise that I will faithfully lay them before him according to your directions, and I flatter myself I can do it to as good effect as any person whatever. I can make no proposals to you until I know your sentiments ; but I think, upon your taking an active part, and embodying the inhabitants of Vermont in favor of the crown of England to act as the Commander-in-chief shall direct, that you may obtain a separate government under the King and constitution of England, and the men be formed into regiments under such officers as you shall recommend, and be on the same footing as all the provincial corps are here.

“I am an American myself, and feel much for the distressed situation my poor country is in

at present, and am anxious to be serviceable toward restoring it to peace, and that mild and good government we have lost. I have therefore ventured to address myself to you on this subject, and I hope you will see it in a proper light, and be as candid with me. I am inclinable to think, that one reason why this unnatural war has continued so long is, that all the Americans, who wish and think it would be for the interest of this country to have a constitutional and equitable connexion with Great Britain, do not communicate their sentiments to each other so often and so freely as they ought to do.

“In case you should disapprove of my hinting these things to you, and do not choose to make any proposals to government, I hope you will not suffer any insult to be offered to the bearer of this letter; but allow him to return in safety, as I can assure you he is entirely ignorant of its contents; but if you should think it proper to send proposals to me, to be laid before the Commander-in-chief, I do now give you my word, that, if they are not accepted, or complied with by him, of which I will inform you, the matter shall be buried in oblivion between us. I will only add, that if you should think proper to send a friend of your own here, with proposals to the general, he shall be protected and well treated here, and allowed to return whenever he pleases.

I can add nothing further at present, but my best wishes for the restoration of the peace and happiness of America.

I am, &c.

“BEVERLY ROBINSON.”

This letter, artful and plausible as it was, made no impression upon the patriotism of Ethan Allen. Although written in February it was not received till July. He immediately sent back the messenger, and in confidence communicated the letter to the governor and a few other friends, who all agreed with him, that it was best to pass it over in silence. That they might not be outdone, however, in the allowable stratagems of war, they be-thought themselves to turn to a profitable purpose this advance on the part of the enemy. The British were expected soon to appear on Lake Champlain in great force, and it was a thing of essential importance in the present difficult condition of Vermont, to ward off the impending danger. Several prisoners from this State were now in Canada, and it was advised that the governor should write to the commander in Canada, proposing a cartel for an exchange. A letter was accordingly despatched with a flag. The object was to produce delay, and by a finesse to lead the enemy to pursue their ideas of drawing Vermont over to their interest. While this should be fostered, it was not probable they would attack the people, whom they wished to conciliate.

No answer was returned, till the enemy's fleet was seen coming up the Lake in a formidable attitude, spreading an alarm far and wide, and apparently threatening an immediate invasion. Many persons took their arms and marched to the frontier. But no hostile acts were committed. The commander on board the fleet sent a flag to General Allen, with a letter to the governor of Vermont, assenting on the part of General Haldimand, commander-in-chief of the British army in Canada, to the proposal for an exchange of prisoners, and offering a truce with Vermont till the cartel should be arranged.

This preliminary negotiation of a truce was conducted by General Allen. In defining the extent of territory, which the truce should cover, he included all the settlements as far west as the Hudson River. To this extension the British officer objected, as not being within the bounds of Vermont. Such an arrangement would moreover prevent the expedition up the Lake from acquiring honor, or attaining any ostensible object ; whereas, if not hampered with the truce, it might act with some effect on the frontiers of New York. This was a strong motive for insisting, that the truce should be confined strictly within the limits of Vermont, but as General Allen was unyielding, the officer gave way, and it was definitively settled as reaching to Hudson's River.



This was a dictate of sound policy, as appeared in the subsequent history of Vermont. It had a conciliatory effect upon the inhabitants of that part of New York included in the truce. Their antipathy was disarmed, and at one time they even courted a union with Vermont.

As this was a secret arrangement, and not then made known publicly, the people were surprised to see the fleet retreating down the Lake, and the military disbanded and going home. Commissioners were appointed by the governor of Vermont to meet others from Canada, and settle the terms of a cartel. The season was so far advanced, however, that they were obstructed in their voyage across the Lake by the ice, and obliged to return. Nothing was done during the winter. The advantage thus far gained by Vermont was, that a campaign of the enemy on her borders had been rendered ineffectual. As a compensation, the British supposed they had made good progress in detaching from Congress the affections of a discontented province, and winning them over to the King.

As these transactions were well known to the enemy in New York, Colonel Robinson was concerned not to have received an answer to his letter. Thinking it might have miscarried, although he had sent a duplicate and triplicate, or assuming such a supposition as a pretence for

writing again, he despatched a second letter to Ethan Allen, dated February 2d, 1781. In this was enclosed a fourth copy of the first, and it contained the following paragraph.

“The frequent accounts we have had for three months past, from your part of the country, confirms me in the opinion I had of your inclination to join the King’s cause, and assist in restoring America to her former peaceable and happy constitution. This induces me to make another trial in sending this to you, especially as I can now write with more authority, and assure you that you may obtain the terms mentioned in the above letter, provided you and the people of Vermont take an active part with us. I beg to have an answer to this as soon as possible, and that you will, if it is your intention, point out some method of carrying on a correspondence for the future; also in what manner you can be most serviceable to government, either by acting with the northern army, or to meet and join an army from hence. I should be glad if you would give me every information, that may be useful to the Commander in-chief here.”

Shortly after receiving this second epistle, General Allen sent them both to the Continental Congress, accompanied by one of his own, in which he expressed in very emphatical language his sentiments in regard to the interests of Ver-

mont, and the unjustifiable attempts of the adjoining States to abridge her rights and even destroy her existence. Having explained the mode in which the letters came into his hands, and mentioned his having shown the first to Governor Chittenden and other gentlemen, he proceeds as follows.

“ The result, after mature deliberation, and considering the extreme circumstances of the State, was, to take no further notice of the matter. The reasons for such a procedure are very obvious to the people of this State, when they consider that Congress have previously claimed an exclusive right of arbitrating on the existence of Vermont, as a separate government ; New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts Bay at the same time claiming this territory, either in whole or in part, and exerting their influence to make schisms among her citizens, thereby, in a considerable degree weakening this government, and exposing its inhabitants to the incursion of the British troops, and their savage allies from the province of Quebec. It seems those governments, regardless of Vermont’s contiguous situation to Canada, do not consider that their northern frontiers have been secured by her, nor the merit of this State in a long and hazardous war ; but have flattered themselves with the expectation, that this State could not fail (with their help) to be des-

olated by a foreign enemy, and that their exorbitant claims and avaricious designs may at some future period take place in this district of country.

“I am confident that Congress will not dispute my sincere attachment to the cause of my country, though I do not hesitate to say, I am fully grounded in opinion, that Vermont has an indubitable right to agree on terms of a cessation of hostilities with Great Britain, provided the United States persist in rejecting her application for a union with them; for Vermont, of all people, would be the most miserable, were she obliged to defend the independence of the united claiming States, and they, at the same time, at full liberty to overturn and ruin the independence of Vermont. I am persuaded, when Congress consider the circumstances of this State, they will be the more surprised, that I have transmitted to them the enclosed letters, than that I have kept them in custody so long; for I am as resolutely determined to defend the independence of Vermont, as Congress are that of the United States; and rather than fail, I will retire with hardy Green Mountain Boys into the desolate caverns of the mountains, and wage war with human nature at large.”

The concluding words of this paragraph may be considered as characteristic of the writer; but

the sentiments expressed in the letter, respecting the allegiance due from Vermont to the United States, were unquestionably entertained by all the principal men of that State. Independence was their first and determined purpose ; and, while they were neglected by Congress, and, like another Poland, threatened with a triple partition between the adjoining States, they felt at liberty to pursue any course, that would secure their safety, and conduct them towards their ultimate object. It was on this principle, that they encouraged advances to be made by the British, and not that they ever had the remotest intention of deserting the cause of their country, or submitting in any manner to the jurisdiction of the English government.

While the war continued, however, these negotiations with the enemy were carried on with much address, and so successfully as to prevent any further hostilities from Canada. A correspondence was kept up, which was known only to a few persons, and was chiefly managed by Ethan Allen and his brother Ira Allen. Messengers came to them secretly with letters, and waited in concealment till consultations were held, and answers prepared, with which they returned to Canada. This was a slow process, but it served to amuse the enemy, and keep their hopes alive. While this could be done, Vermont was safe from

attack, and had only to apprehend the artifices of those, who were striving by the weapons of the civil power to annihilate her freedom.

The English ministry had at one time sanguine expectations from the prospect of affairs in this quarter. I have seen two letters from Lord George Germain to Sir Henry Clinton, one written in February and the other in June, 1781, wherein the minister congratulates the commander-in-chief on the happy return of the people of Vermont to their allegiance, and represents it as an important event. He adds, that, should Washington and the French meditate an irruption into Canada, they would find in Vermont an insurmountable barrier to their attempts; and also that General Haldimand would undoubtedly send a body of troops to act in conjunction with the people, secure the avenues through the country, and, when the season should admit, take possession of the upper parts of the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers, and cut off the communication between Albany and the Mohawk country. Again he observes, that, should the people of Vermont be menaced by a detachment from Washington's army, General Haldimand would have forces ready to throw in among them, by which they would be relieved from any fears of the resentment of Congress, and see it to be their wisest and safest course to return to their loyalty.

Such were the vagaries of Lord George Germain in his office at Whitehall, even within a few months of the capitulation at Yorktown. And in truth they present a very just specimen of the strange reveries, surprising ignorance, or wilful blindness of that minister, in regard to American affairs, during the whole war.

General Allen was not entirely occupied with the duties of his military station. At the next election after his return from captivity, he was chosen a representative to the Assembly of his State. How long he continued in public life as a legislator, or how long he retained the active command of the militia, I have not been able to ascertain. When peace was restored, however, he seems to have resumed his agricultural habits, and devoted himself to his private affairs. He was a practical farmer, accustomed to labor with his own hands, and submit to the privations and hardships, which necessarily attend the condition of pioneers in a new country.

In this retirement he published a work on a series of topics very different from those, which had heretofore employed his pen.\* He says in

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\* The book is entitled, *Reason the only Oracle of Man, or a Compendious System of Natural Religion*. It was published at Bennington, in the year 1784. The preface is dated July 2d, 1782.

the Preface, that he had been from his youth addicted to contemplation, and had from time to time committed his thoughts to paper. This book purports to be the result of his lucubrations, revised, arranged, and prepared with much labor for the press. In its literary execution it is much superior to any of his other writings, and was evidently elaborated with great patience of thought and care in the composition. It is nevertheless a crude and worthless performance, in which truth and error, reason and sophistry, knowledge and ignorance, ingenuity and presumption, are mingled together in a chaos, which the author denominates a system. Some of the chapters on natural religion, the being and attributes of God, and the principles and obligations of morality, should perhaps be excepted from this sweeping remark; for, although they contain little that is new, yet they are written in a tone, and express sentiments, which may screen them from so heavy a censure.

Founding religion on the attributes of the Deity and the nature of things, as interpreted by reason, the author takes it for granted, that there is no necessity for a revelation, and thence infers, that the Christian Revelation and miracles are false; and he argues against the Old Testament upon the same principles. Historical facts and internal evidence, the only basis of



correct reasoning on this subject, are passed over in silence. There is no proof that the author ever examined them. It must be allowed, however, that he mistook some of the errors of Christian sects for the true doctrines of revealed religion, and that his views, as to the reality and nature of the system itself, were perverted by this misapprehension.

If we may judge, also, from various passages in this book, some of his biographers have not done him strict justice in regard to his religious opinions. They have affirmed, that he believed in the metempsychosis of the ancients, or the transmigration of souls after death into beasts, or fishes, and that "he often informed his friends, that he himself expected to live again in the form of a large white horse." If he was absurd and frivolous enough to say such a thing in conversation, he has certainly expressed very different sentiments in his writings. No person could declare more explicitly his belief in a future state of rewards and punishments, and a just retribution, than he has done in the following passages contained in this book.

"We should so far divest ourselves," he observes, "of the incumbrances of this world, which are too apt to engross our attention, as to acquire a consistent system of the knowledge of our duty, and make it our constant endeavor in life to act

conformably to it. The knowledge of the being, perfections, creation, and providence of God, and the immortality of our souls, is the foundation of our religion." Again, "As true as mankind now exist and are endowed with reason and understanding, and have the power of agency and proficiency in moral good and evil, so true it is, that they must be ultimately rewarded or punished according to their respective merits or demerits; and it is as true as this world exists, and rational and accountable beings inhabit it, that the distribution of justice therein is partial, unequal, and uncertain; and it is consequently as true as that there is a God, that there must be a future state of existence, in which the disorder, injustice, oppression, and viciousness, which are acted and transacted by mankind in this life, shall be righteously adjusted, and the delinquents suitably punished."

To what extent these doctrines bear out the charge of a belief in the transmigration of souls, let the reader judge.

After the publication of the above work, I have not found recorded any events in the life of Ethan Allen, which are sufficiently important to be commemorated; unless it be the circumstance of his having been solicited, by Shays and his associates, to take command of the insurgents in Massachusetts. He rejected the proposal with disdain, sending back the messengers who brought it, with

a reprimand for their presumption, and at the same time writing a letter to the governor of Massachusetts, in which he expressed his abhorrence of the insurrection, and assured the governor that his influence should be used to prevent any of its agents and abettors from receiving countenance or taking refuge in Vermont. This was conformable to all his previous conduct; for, notwithstanding the scenes of turbulence in which he was often engaged, it should be remembered to his honor, that he was ever, in theory and practice, a firm supporter of civil government when founded in equity and the rights of the people. So rigid was he in his patriotism, that, when it was discovered that one of his brothers had avowed Tory principles, and been guilty of a correspondence with the enemy, he entered a public complaint against him in his own name, and petitioned the court to confiscate his property in obedience to the laws of the State.

Before the end of the war, General Allen removed from Bennington, which had long been his place of residence. He was next for a short time an inhabitant of Arlington, afterwards of Sunderland, and finally he settled himself in the vicinity of Onion River, where he and his brothers had purchased large tracts of land. He was twice married. His second wife, and children by both marriages, survived him. Through life

he possessed a robust constitution, and uncommonly good health; but his career was suddenly terminated by an apoplexy, at Burlington, in the year 1789.

We have thus sketched the principal incidents in the life of a man, who holds a place of some notoriety in the history of his times. His character was strongly marked, both by its excellences and defects; but it may safely be said, that the latter were attributable more to circumstances beyond his control, than to any original obliquity of his mind or heart. The want of early education, and the habits acquired by his pursuits in a rude and uncultivated state of society, were obstacles to his attainment of some of the higher and better qualities, which were not to be overcome. A roughness of manners and coarseness of language, a presumptuous way of reasoning upon all subjects, and his religious skepticism, may be traced to these sources. Faults of this stamp, and others akin to them, admit of no defence, though, when viewed in connexion with their causes, they may have claims to a charitable judgment. Had his understanding been weak, his temperament less ardent, his disposition less inquisitive, and his desire of honorable distinction less eager, the world would probably never have heard of his faults; the shield of insignificance would have covered them; but it was his destiny to be con-

spicuous, without the art to conceal or culture to soften his foibles.

Yet there is much to admire in the character of Ethan Allen. He was brave, generous, and frank, true to his friends, true to his country, consistent and unyielding in his purposes, seeking at all times to promote the best interests of mankind, a lover of social harmony, and a determined foe to the artifices of injustice and the encroachments of power. Few have suffered more in the cause of freedom, few have borne their sufferings with a firmer constancy or a loftier spirit. His courage, even when apparently approaching to rashness, was calm and deliberate. No man probably ever possessed this attribute in a more remarkable degree. He was eccentric and ambitious, but these weaknesses, if such they were, never betrayed him into acts dishonorable, unworthy, or selfish. His enemies never had cause to question his magnanimity, nor his friends to regret confidence misplaced or expectations disappointed. He was kind and benevolent, humane and placable. In short, whatever may have been his peculiarities, or however these may have diminished the weight of his influence and the value of his public services, it must be allowed, that he was a man of very considerable importance in the sphere of his activity, and that to no individual among her patriot founders is the State

of Vermont more indebted for the basis of her free institutions, and the achievement of her independence, than to **ETHAN ALLEN**.

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ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS  
 1-month loans may be renewed by calling 642-3405  
 6-month loans may be recharged by bringing books to Circulation Desk  
 Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days prior to due date

**DUE AS STAMPED BELOW**

AUG 16 1979	MAR 18 1987	
<b>IN STACKS</b>	AUTO. DISC. FEB 25 '87	
FEB 21 1979		
	JAN 23 1996	
	RECEIVED	
<b>IN STACKS</b>	JUN 30 1995	
MAR 8 1979		
CIR. AUG 15 1979		
FEB 24 1980		
<b>IN STACKS</b>		
AUG 24 1979		
CIR. AUG 31 1979		

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